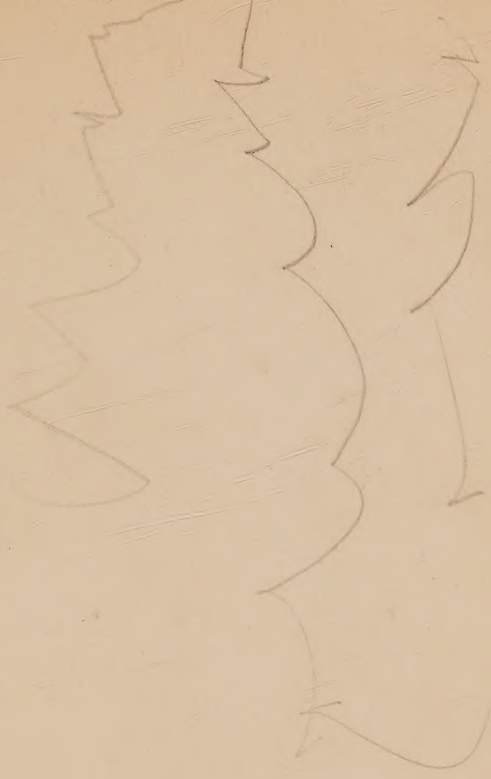


Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/novelsofvictorhu0000unse_z5q7

THE VALJEAN EDITION OF THE
NOVELS OF VICTOR HUGO

Les Misérables

VOLUME I

BY

VICTOR HUGO

ILLUSTRATED

P. F. COLLIER & SON
NEW YORK

CONTENTS

VOLUME I

FANTINE

BOOK I

An Upright Man 5

BOOK II

The Fall 62

BOOK III

In the Year 1817 119

BOOK IV

To Intrust is Sometimes to Abandon 149

BOOK V

The Descent 162

BOOK VI

Javert 205

BOOK VII

The Champmathieu Affair 217

BOOK VIII

Counter-Stroke 290

COSETTE

BOOK I

Waterloo 309

BOOK II

The Ship "Orion" 367

BOOK III

Fulfilment of the Promise to the Departed 382

BOOK IV

The Old Gorbeau House 438

BOOK V

A Dark Chase Needs a Silent Hound 456

BOOK VI

Petit Picpus 489

PREFACE

So LONG as there shall exist, by reason of law and custom, a social condemnation, which, in the face of civilization, artificially creates hells on earth and complicates a destiny that is divine with human fatality; so long as the three problems of the age—the degradation of man by poverty, the ruin of woman by starvation, and the dwarfing of childhood by physical and spiritual night—are not solved; so long as, in certain regions, social asphyxia shall be possible; in other words, and from a yet more extended point of view, so long as ignorance and misery remain on earth, books like this can not be useless.

Hauteville House, 1862.

LES MISERABLES

FANTINE

BOOK FIRST—AN UPRIGHT MAN

I

M. MYRIEL

IN 1815 M. Charles François-Bienvenu Myriel was Bishop of D——. He was a man of seventy-five and had occupied the bishopric of D—— since 1806. Although it in no manner concerns, even in the remotest degree, what we have to relate, it may not be useless, were it only for the sake of exactness in all things, to notice here the reports and gossip which had arisen on his account from the time of his arrival in the diocese.

Be it true or false, what is said about men often has as much influence upon their lives, and especially upon their destinies, as what they do.

M. Myriel was the son of a counselor of the Parliament of Aix; of the rank given to the legal profession. His father, intending him to inherit his place, had contracted a marriage for him at the early age of eighteen or twenty, according to a widespread custom among parliamentary families. Charles Myriel, notwithstanding this marriage, had, it was said, been an object of much attention. His person was admirably molded; although of slight figure, he was elegant and graceful; all the earlier part of his life had been devoted to the world and to its pleasures. The Revolution came; events crowded upon each other; the parliamentary families, decimated, hunted and pursued, were soon dispersed. M. Charles Myriel, on the first outbreak of the Revolution, emigrated to Italy. His wife died there of a lung complaint with which she had long been threatened. They had no children. What followed in the fate

of M. Myriel? The decay of the old French society, the fall of his own family, the tragic sights of '93, still more fearful, perhaps, to the exiles who beheld them from afar, magnified by fright—did these arouse in him ideas of renunciation and of solitude? Was he, in the midst of one of the reveries or emotions which then consumed his life, suddenly attacked by one of those mysterious and terrible blows which sometimes overwhelm, by smiting to the heart, the man whom public disasters could not shake, by aiming at life or fortune? No one could have answered; all that was known was that when he returned from Italy he was a priest.

In 1804 M. Myriel was Curé of B—— (Brignolles). He was then an old man, and lived in the deepest seclusion.

Near the time of the coronation a trifling matter of business belonging to his curacy—what it was is not now known precisely—took him to Paris.

Among other personages of authority he went to Cardinal Fesch on behalf of his parishioners.

One day, when the Emperor had come to visit his uncle, the worthy curé, who was waiting in the anteroom, happened to be on the way of his Majesty. Napoleon, noticing that the old man looked at him with a certain curiousness, turned around and said, brusquely: "Who is this good man who looks at me?"

"Sire," said M. Myriel, "you behold a good man and I a great man. Each of us may profit by it."

That evening the Emperor asked the Cardinal the name of the curé, and some time afterward M. Myriel was overwhelmed with surprise on learning that he had been appointed Bishop of D——.

Beyond this, no one knew how much truth there was in the stories which passed current concerning the first portion of M. Myriel's life. But few families had known the Myriels before the Revolution.

M. Myriel had to submit to the fate of every new-comer in a small town, where there are many tongues to talk and but few heads to think. He had to submit, although he was bishop, and because he was bishop. But, after all, the gossip with which his name was connected was only gossip; noise, talk, words, less than words—*palabres,* as they say in the forcible language of the south.

Be that as it may, after nine years of episcopacy and of residence in D——, all these stories, topics of talk, which engross at first petty towns and petty people, were entirely forgotten. Nobody would have dared to speak of, or even to remember them.

When M. Myriel came to D—— he was accompanied by an old lady, Mdlle. Baptistine, who was his sister, ten years younger than himself.

Their only domestic was a woman of about the same age as Mdlle. Baptistine, who was called Mme. Magloire, and who, after having been the servant of M. le Curé, now took the double title of femme-de-chambre of mademoiselle and housekeeper of monseigneur.

Mdlle. Baptistine was a tall, pale, thin, sweet person. She fully realized the idea which is expressed by the word "respectable"; for it seems as if it were necessary that a woman should be a mother to be venerable. She had never been pretty; her whole life, which had been but a succession of pious works, had produced upon her a kind of transparent whiteness, and in growing old she had acquired what may be called the beauty of goodness. What had been thinness in her youth had become in maturity transparency, and this etherealness permitted gleams of the angel within. She was more a spirit than a virgin mortal. Her form was shadow-like, hardly enough body to convey the thought of sex—a little earth containing a spark—large eyes, always cast down; a pretext for a soul to remain on earth.

Mme. Magloire was a little, white, fat, jolly, bustling old woman, always out of breath, caused first by her activity, and then by the asthma.

M. Myriel, upon his arrival, was installed in his episcopal palace with the honors ordained by the imperial decrees, which class the bishop next in rank to the field-marshal. The mayor and the president made him the first visit, and he, on his part, paid like honor to the general and the prefect.

The installation being completed, the town was curious to see its bishop at work.

II

M. MYRIEL BECOMES MGR. BIENVENU

THE bishop's palace at D—— was contiguous to the hospital; the palace was a spacious and beautiful edifice, built of stone near the beginning of the last century by Mgr. Henri Pujet, a doctor of theology of the faculty of Paris, Abbé of Sinmore, who was Bishop of D—— in 1712. The palace was in truth a lordly dwelling; there was an air of grandeur about everything, the apartments of the bishop, the salons, the chambers, the court of honor, which was very large, with arched walks after the antique Florentine style; and a garden planted with magnificent trees.

In the dining-hall was a long, superb gallery, which was level with the ground, opening upon the garden; Mgr. Henri Pujet had given a grand banquet on the 29th of July, 1714, to Mgr. Charles Brulart de Genlis, archbishop; Prince d'Embrun, Antoine de Mesgrigny, capuchin, Bishop of Grasse; Philippe de Vendôme, Grand Prior de France; the Abbé de St. Honoré de Lérins, François de Berton de Grillon, Lord Bishop of Venice; César de Sabran de Forcalquier, Lord Bishop of Glandève, et Jean Soanen, priest of the oratory, preacher in ordinary to the King, Lord Bishop of Senez; the portraits of these seven reverend personages decorated the hall, and this memorable date, July 29, 1714, appeared in letters of gold on a white marble tablet.

The hospital was a low, narrow, one-story building with a small garden.

Three days after the bishop's advent he visited the hospital; when the visit was ended he invited the director to oblige him by coming to the palace.

"Monsieur," he said to the director of the hospital, "how many patients have you?"

"Twenty-six, monseigneur."

"That is as I counted them," said the bishop.

"The beds," continued the director, "are very much crowded."

"I noticed it."

"The wards are but small chambers and are not easily ventilated."

"It seems so to me."

"And then, when the sun does shine, the garden is very small for the convalescents."

"That was what I was thinking."

"Of epidemics, we have had typhus fever this year; two years ago we had miliary fever, sometimes one hundred patients, and we did not know what to do."

"That occurred to me."

"What can we do, monseigneur?" said the director; "we must be resigned."

This conversation took place in the dining gallery on the ground floor.

The bishop was silent for a few moments; then he turned suddenly toward the director.

"Monsieur," he said, "how many beds do you think this hall alone would contain?"

"The dining-hall of monseigneur!" exclaimed the director, stupefied.

The bishop ran his eyes over the hall, seemingly taking measures and making calculations.

"It will hold twenty beds," said he to himself; then raising his voice, he said: "Listen, M. Director, to what I have to say. There is evidently a mistake here. There are twenty-six of you in five or six small rooms; there are only three of us, and space for sixty. There is a mistake, I tell you. You have my house and I have yours. Restore mine to me; you are at home."

Next day the twenty-six poor invalids were installed in the bishop's palace and the bishop was in the hospital.

M. Myriel had no property, his family having been impoverished by the Revolution. His sister had a life estate of 500 francs, which in the vicarage sufficed for her personal needs. M. Myriel received from the government as bishop a salary of 15,000 francs. The day on which he took up his residence in the hospital building he resolved to appropriate this sum once for all to the following uses. We copy the schedule then written by him:

SCHEDULE FOR THE REGULATION OF MY HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES

	Livres
For the little seminary	1,500
Mission congregation	100
For the Lazaristes of Montdidier	100
Seminary of foreign missions in Paris	200
Congregation of the Saint-Esprit	150
Religious establishments in the Holy Land	100
Maternal charitable societies	300
For that of Arles	50
For the amelioration of prisons	400
For the relief and deliverance of prisoners	500
For the liberation of fathers of families, imprisoned for debt	1,000
Additions to the salaries of poor schoolmasters of the diocese	2,000
Public storehouse of Hautes-Alpes	100
Association of the ladies of D—— of Manosque and Sisteron for the gratuitous instruction of poor girls	1,500
For the poor	6,000
My personal expenses	1,000
Total	15,000

M. Myriel made no alteration in this plan during the time he held the See of D——; he called it, as will be seen, *the regulation of his household expenses.*

Mdlle. Baptistine accepted this arrangement with entire submission; M. Myriel was to her at once her brother and her bishop, her companion by ties of blood and her superior by ecclesiastical authority. She loved and venerated him unaffectedly; when he spoke, she listened; when he acted, she gave him her co-operation. Mme. Magloire, however, their servant, grumbled a little. The bishop, as will be seen, had reserved but 1,000 francs. This, added to the income of Mdlle. Baptistine, gave them a yearly dependence of 1,500 francs, upon which the three old people subsisted.

Thanks, however, to the rigid economy of Mme. Magloire and the excellent management of Mdlle. Baptistine, whenever a curate came to D—— the bishop found means to extend to him his hospitality.

About three months after the installation the bishop said one day: "With all this I am very much cramped." "I think so, too," said Mme. Magloire; "monseigneur has not even asked for the sum due to him by the department for his carriage expenses in town and in his circuits in the diocese. It was formerly the custom with all bishops."

"Yes!" said the bishop; "you are right, Mme. Magloire." He made his application.

Some time afterward the conseil-général took his claim into consideration and voted him an annual stipend of 3,000 francs under this head: "Allowance to the bishop for carriage expenses and traveling expenses for pastoral visits."

The *bourgeoisie* of the town were much excited on the subject, and in regard to it a Senator of the Empire, formerly member of the Council of Five Hundred, an advocate of the Eighteenth Brumaire, now provided with a rich senatorial seat near D——, wrote to M. Bigot de Préameneu, Minister of Public Worship, a fault-finding, confidential epistle, from which we make the following extract:

> Carriage expenses! What can he want of it in a town of less than 4,000 inhabitants? Expenses of pastoral visits! And what good do they do, in the first place; and, then, how is it possible to travel by post in this mountain region? There are no roads; he can go only on horseback Even the bridge over the Durance at Chateau-Arnoux is scarcely passable for ox-carts. These priests are always so; avaricious and miserly. This one played the good apostle at the outset; now he acts like the rest; he must have a carriage and post-chaise. He must have luxury, like the old bishops. Bah! this whole priesthood! M. le Comte, things will never be better till the Emperor delivers us from these macaroni priests. Down with the Pope! [Matters were getting embroiled with Rome.] As for me, I am for Cæsar alone, etc.

This application, on the other hand, pleased Mme. Magloire exceedingly. "Good," said she to Mdlle. Baptistine. "Monseigneur began with the others, but he has found at last that he must end by taking care of himself. He has arranged all his charities, and so now here are 3,000 francs for us."

The same evening the bishop wrote and gave to his sister a note couched in these terms:

CARRIAGE AND TRAVELING EXPENSES

	Livres
For beef broth for the hospital	1,500
For the Aix Maternal Charity Association	250
For the Draguignan Maternal Charity Association	250
For foundlings	500
For orphans	500
Total	3,000

Such was the budget of M. Myriel.

In regard to the official perquisites. marriage licenses,

dispensations, private baptisms, and preaching, consecrations of churches or chapels, marriages, etc., the bishop gathered them from the wealthy with as much exactness as he dispensed them to the poor.

In a short time donations of money began to come in; those who had and those who had not knocked at the bishop's door; some came to receive alms and others to bestow them, and in less than a year he had become the treasurer of all the benevolent and the dispenser to all the needy. Large sums passed through his hands; nevertheless he changed in no wise his mode of life nor added the least luxury to his simple fare.

On the contrary, as there is always more misery among the lower classes than there is humanity among the higher, everything was given away, so to speak, before it was received, like water on thirsty soil; it was well that money came to him, for he never kept any; and, besides, he robbed himself. It being the custom that all bishops should put their baptismal names at the head of their orders and pastoral letters, the poor people of the district had chosen by a sort of affectionate instinct from among the names of the bishop that which was expressive to them, and they always called him Mgr. Bienvenu. We shall follow their example and call him thus; besides, this pleased him. "I like this name," said he; "Bienvenu counterbalances monseigneur."

We do not claim that the portrait which we present here is a true one; we may say only that it resembles him.

III

GOOD BISHOP—HARD BISHOPRIC

THE bishop, after converting his carriage into alms, none the less regularly made his round of visits, and in the diocese of D—— this was a wearisome task. There was very little plain, a good deal of mountain and hardly any roads as a matter of course; thirty-two curacies, forty-one vicarages and 285 sub-curacies. To visit all these is a great labor, but the bishop went through with it. He traveled on foot in his own neighborhood, in a cart when he was in the plains and in a *cacolet* (a basket strapped on the back of a mule) when in the mountains. The two

women usually accompanied him; but when the journey was too difficult for them he went alone.

One day he arrived at Senez, formerly the seat of a bishopric, mounted on an ass. His purse was very empty at the time and would not permit any better conveyance. The mayor of the city came to receive him at the gate of the episcopal residence and saw him dismount from his ass, with astonishment and mortification. Several of the citizens stood near by, laughing. "M. Mayor," said the bishop, "and messieurs citizens, I see what astonishes you; you think that it shows a good deal of pride for a priest to use the same conveyance which was used by Jesus Christ. I have done it from necessity, I assure you, and not from vanity."

In his visits he was indulgent and gentle and preached less than he talked. He never used far-fetched reasons or examples. To the inhabitants of one region he would cite the examples of a neighboring region. In the cantons, where the necessitous were treated with severity, he would say: "Look at the people of Briancon. They have given to the poor and to the widows and orphans the right to mow their meadows three days before any one else. When their houses are in ruins they rebuild them without cost. And so it is a country blessed of God. For a whole century they have not had a single murderer."

In the villages where the people were greedy for gain at harvest time he would say: "Look at Embrun. If a father of a family, at harvest time, has his sons in the army and his daughters at service in the city, and he is sick, the priest recommends him in his sermons, and on Sunday, after mass, the whole population of the village, men, women, and children, go into the poor man's field and harvest his crop and put the straw and the grain into his granary." To families divided by questions of property and inheritance he would say: "See the mountaineers of Devolny, a country so wild that the nightingale is not heard there once in fifty years. Well, now, when a father dies in a family the boys go away to seek their fortunes and leave the property to the girls, so that they may get husbands." In those cantons where there was a taste for the law and where the farmers were ruining themselves with stamped paper he would say: "Look at those good peasants of the valley of Queyras.

There are 3,000 souls there. Why, it is like a little republic! Neither judge nor constable is known there. The mayor does everything. He apportions the impost, taxes each one according to his judgment, decides their quarrels without charge, distributes their patrimony without fees, gives judgment without expense; and he is obeyed, because he is a just man among simple-hearted men." In the villages which he found without a schoolmaster he would again hold up the valley of Queyras. "Do you know how they do?" he would say. "As a little district of twelve or fifteen houses can not always support a teacher, they have schoolmasters that are paid by the whole valley, who go around from village to village, passing a week in this place and ten days in that, and give instruction. These masters attend the fairs, where I have seen them. They are known by quills which they wear in their hat-band. Those who teach only how to read have one quill; those who teach reading and arithmetic have two; and those who teach reading, arithmetic, and Latin have three; the latter are esteemed great scholars. But what a shame to be ignorant! Do like the people of Queyras."

In such fashion would he talk, gravely and paternally; in default of examples he would invent parables, going straight to his object, with few phrases and many images, which was the very eloquence of Jesus Christ, convincing and persuasive.

IV

WORKS ANSWERING WORDS

HIS conversation was affable and pleasant. He adapted himself to the capacity of the two old women who lived with him, but when he laughed it was the laugh of a schoolboy.

Mme. Magloire usually called him *Your Greatness.* One day he rose from his armchair and went to his library for a book. It was upon one of the upper shelves, and, as the bishop was rather short, he could not reach it. "Mme. Magloire," said he, "bring me a chair. My greatness does not extend to this shelf."

One of his distant relatives, the Countess of Lô, rarely let an occasion escape of enumerating in his presence what

she called "the expectations" of her three sons. She had several relatives, very old and near their death, of whom her sons were the legal heirs. The youngest of the three was to receive from a great-aunt 100,000 livres in the funds; the second was to take the title of duke from his uncle; the eldest would succeed to the peerage of his grandfather. The bishop commonly listened in silence to these innocent and pardonable maternal displays. Once, however, he appeared more dreamy than was his custom while Mme. de Lô rehearsed the detail of all these successions and all these "expectations." Stopping suddenly, with some impatience, she exclaimed: "My goodness, cousin, what are you thinking about?" "I am thinking," said the bishop, "of a strange thing which is, I believe, in St. Augustine: 'Place your expectations on Him to whom there is no succession!'"

On another occasion, when he received a letter announcing the decease of a gentleman of the country, in which were detailed, at great length, not only the dignities of the departed but the feudal and titular honors of all his relatives, he exclaimed: "What a broad back has death! What a wondrous load of titles will he cheerfully carry, and what hardihood must men have who will thus use the tomb to feed their vanity."

At times he made use of gentle raillery, which was almost always charged with serious ideas. Once, during Lent, a young vicar came to D——, and preached in the cathedral. The subject of his sermon was charity, and he treated it very eloquently. He called upon the rich to give alms to the poor, if they would escape the tortures of hell, which he pictured in the most fearful colors, and enter that paradise which he painted as so desirable and inviting. There was a retired merchant of wealth in the audience, a little given to usury—M. Géborand—who had accumulated an estate of 2,000,000 francs in the manufacture of coarse cloths and serges. Never, in the whole course of his life, had M. Géborand given alms to the unfortunate; but, from the date of this sermon, it was noticed that he gave regularly, every Sunday, a penny to the old beggar woman at the door of the cathedral. There were six of them to share it. The bishop chanced to see him one day as he was performing this act of charity, and said to his sister. with a

smile: "See M. Géborand buying a pennyworth of paradise."

When soliciting aid for any charity he was not silenced by a refusal; he was at no loss for words that would set the hearers thinking. One day he was receiving alms for the poor in a parlor in the city, where the Marquis of Champtercier, who was old, rich, and miserly, was present. The marquis managed to be, at the same time, an ultra-royalist and an ultra-Voltairian, a species of which he was not the only representative. The bishop coming to him in turn touched his arm and said: "M. le Marquis, you must give me something." The marquis turned and answered dryly: "Monseigneur, I have my own poor." "Give them to me," said the bishop.

One day he preached this sermon in the cathedral:

My very dear brethren, my good friends, there are in France 1,320,000 peasants' cottages that have but three openings; 1,817,000 that have two, the door and one window; and, finally, 346,000 cabins with only one opening—the door. And this is in consequence of what is called the excise upon doors and windows. In these poor families, among the aged women and the little children, dwelling in these huts, how abundant is fever and disease! Alas! God gives light to men; the law sells it. I do not blame the law, but I bless God. In Isere, in Var, and in the Upper and Lower Alps the peasants have not even wheelbarrows—they carry the manure on their backs; they have no candles, but burn pine knots and bits of rope soaked in pitch. And the same is the case all through the upper part of Dauphine. They make bread once in six months and bake it with the refuse of the fields. In the winter it becomes so hard that they cut it up with an axe and soak it for twenty-four hours before they can eat it. My brethren, be compassionate! Behold how much suffering there is around you.

Born a Provençal, he had easily made himself familiar with all the patois of the south. He would say: "Eh, bè! moussu, sès, sagé?" as in Lower Languedoc; "Onté anaras passa?" as in the Lower Alps; "Puerte un bouen mow tou embe un bowen froumage grase," as in Upper Dauphiné. This pleased the people greatly and contributed not a little to giving him ready access to their hearts. He was the same in a cottage and on the mountains as in his own house. He could say the grandest things in the most common language; and as he spoke all dialects his words entered the souls of all.

Moreover, his manners with the rich were the same as with the poor.

He condemned nothing hastily or without taking account of circumstances. He would say: "Let us see the way in which the fault came to pass."

Being, as he smilingly described himself, an *ex-sinner,* he had none of the inaccessibility of a rigorist, and boldly professed, even under the frowning eyes of the ferociously virtuous, a doctrine which may be stated nearly as follows:

Man has a body, which is at once his burden and his temptation. He drags it along and yields to it.

He ought to watch over it, to keep it in bounds; to repress it, and only to obey it at the last extremity. It may be wrong to obey even then, but, if so, the fault is venial. It is a fall, but a fall upon the knees, which may end in prayer.

To be a saint is the exception; to be upright is the rule. Err, falter, sin, but be upright.

To commit the least possible sin is the law for man. To live without sin is the dream of an angel. Everything terrestrial is subject to sin. Sin is a gravitation.

When he heard many exclaiming and expressing great indignation against anything, "Oh! oh!" he would say, smiling: "It would seem that this is a great crime, of which they are all guilty. How frightened hypocrisy hastens to defend itself and to get under cover."

He was indulgent toward women and toward the poor, upon whom the weight of society falls most heavily; and said: "The faults of women, children, and servants, of the feeble, the indigent, and the ignorant are the faults of their husbands, fathers, and masters, of the strong, the rich, and the wise." At other times he said: "Teach the ignorant as much as you can; society is culpable in not providing instruction for all, and it must answer for the night which it produces. If the soul is left in darkness, sins will be committed. The guilty one is not he who commits the sin, but he who causes the darkness."

As we see, he had a strange and peculiar way of judging things. I suspect that he acquired it from the Gospel.

In company one day he heard an account of a criminal case that was about to be tried. A miserable man, through love for a woman and for the child she had borne him, had been making false coin, his means being exhausted. At that time counterfeiting was still punished with death. The woman was arrested for passing the first piece that he had made. She was held a prisoner, but there was no

proof against her lover. She alone could testify against him and convict him by her confession. She denied his guilt. They insisted, but she was obstinate in her denial. In this state of the case, the *procureur du roi* devised a shrewd plan. He represented to her that her lover was unfaithful, and by means of fragments of letters skilfully put together succeeded in persuading the unfortunate woman that she had a rival, and that this man had deceived her. At once exasperated by jealousy, she denounced her lover, confessed all, and proved his guilt. He was to be tried in a few days at Aix, with his accomplice, and his conviction was certain. The story was told, and everybody was in esctasy at the adroitness of the officer. In bringing jealousy into play he had brought truth to light by means of anger and justice had sprung from revenge. The bishop listened to all this in silence. When it was finished he asked: "Where are this man and woman to be tried?"

"At the Assizes."

"And where is the *procureur du roi* to be tried?"

A tragic event occurred at D——. A man had been condemned to death for murder. The unfortunate prisoner was a poorly educated but not entirely ignorant man, who had been a juggler at fairs and a public letter-writer. The people were greatly interested in the trial. The evening before the day fixed for the execution of the condemned the almoner of the prison fell ill. A priest was needed to attend the prisoner in his last moments. The curé was sent for, but he refused to go, saying: "That does not concern me. I have nothing to do with such drudgery or with that mountebank; besides, I am sick myself; and, moreover, it is not my place." When this reply was reported to the bishop he said: "The curé is right. It is not his place; it is mine."

He went, on the instant, to the prison, went down into the dungeon of the "mountebank," called him by his name, took him by the hand, and talked with him. He passed the whole day with him, forgetful of food and sleep, praying to God for the soul of the condemned, and exhorting the condemned to join with him. He spoke to him the best truths, which are the simplest. He was father, brother, friend; bishop for blessing only. He taught him everything by encouraging and consoling him. This man would

have died in despair. Death, for him, was like an abyss. Standing shivering upon the dreadful brink, he recoiled with horror. He was not ignorant enough to be indifferent. The terrible shock of his condemnation had in some sort broken here and there that wall which separates us from the mystery of things beyond and which we call life. Through these fatal breaches he was constantly looking beyond this world, and he could see nothing but darkness; the bishop showed him the light.

On the morrow, when they came for the poor man, the bishop was with him. He followed him and showed himself to the eyes of the crowd in his violet camail, with his bishop's cross about his neck, side by side with the miserable being, who was bound with cords.

He mounted the cart with him, he ascended the scaffold with him. The sufferer, so gloomy and so horror-stricken in the evening, was now radiant with hope. He felt that his soul was reconciled and he trusted in God. The bishop embraced him, and at the moment when the axe was about to fall he said to him: "Whom man kills, him God restoreth to life; whom his brethren put away, he findeth the Father. Pray, believe, enter into life! The Father is there." When he descended from the scaffold something in his look made the people fall back. It would be hard to say which was the most wonderful, his paleness or his serenity. As he entered the humble dwelling which he smilingly called his palace he said to his sister: "I have been officiating pontifically."

As the most sublime things are often least comprehended, there were those in the city who said, in commenting upon the bishop's conduct, that it was affectation, but such ideas were confined to the upper classes. The people, who do not look for unworthy motives in holy works, admired and were softened.

As to the bishop, the sight of the guillotine was a shock to him, from which it was long before he recovered.

The scaffold, indeed, when it is prepared and set up has the effect of an hallucination. We may be indifferent to the death penalty, and may not declare ourselves, yes or no, so long as we have not seen a guillotine with our own eyes. But when we see one the shock is violent, and we are compelled to decide and take part for or against.

Some admire it, like Le Maistre; others execrate it, like Beccaria. The guillotine is the concretion of the law; it is called the Avenger; it is not neutral and does not permit you to remain neutral. He who sees it quakes with the most mysterious of tremblings. All social questions set up their points of interrogation about this axe. The scaffold is vision. The scaffold is not a mere frame, the scaffold is not a machine, the scaffold is not an inert piece of mechanism made of wood, of iron, and of ropes. It seems a sort of being which had some sombre origin of which we can have no idea; one would say that this frame sees, that this machine understands, that this mechanism comprehends; that this wood, this iron, and these ropes have a will. In the fearful reverie into which its presence casts the soul, the awful apparition of the scaffold confounds itself with its horrid work. The scaffold becomes the accomplice of the executioner; it devours, it eats flesh, and it drinks blood. The scaffold is a sort of monster created by the judge and the workingman, a spectre which seems to live with a kind of unspeakable life, drawn from all the death which it has wrought.

Thus the impression was horrible and deep; on the morrow of the execution, and for many days, the bishop appeared to be overwhelmed. The almost violent calmness of the fatal moment had disappeared; the phantom of social justice took possession of him. He, who ordinarily looked back upon all his actions with a satisfaction so radiant, now seemed to be a subject of self-reproach. By times he would talk to himself, and in an undertone mutter dismal monologues. One evening his sister overheard and preserved the following: "I did not believe that it could be so monstrous. It is wrong to be so absorbed in the divine law as not to perceive the human law. Death belongs to God alone. By what right do men touch that unknown thing?"

With the lapse of time these impressions faded away and were probably effaced. Nevertheless, it was remarked that the bishop ever after avoided passing by the place of execution.

M. Myriel could be called at all hours to the bedside of the sick and the dying. He well knew that there was his highest duty and his greatest work. Widowed or orphan

families had no need to send for him; he came of himself. He would sit silent for long hours by the side of a man who had lost the wife whom he loved, or of a mother who had lost her child. As he knew the time for silence, he knew also the time for speech. Oh, admirable consoler! he did not seek to drown grief in oblivion, but to exalt and to dignify it by hope. He would say: "Be careful of the way in which you think of the dead. Think not of what might have been. Look steadfastly and you shall see the living glory of your well-beloved dead in the depths of heaven." He believed that faith is healthful. He sought to counsel and to calm the despairing man by pointing out to him the man of resignation, and to transform the grief which looks down into the grave by showing it the grief which looks up to the stars.

V

HOW MGR. BIENVENU MADE HIS CASSOCK LAST SO LONG

THE private life of M. Myriel was full of the same thoughts as his public life. To one who could have seen it on the spot the voluntary poverty in which the Bishop of D—— lived would have been a serious as well as pleasant sight.

Like all old men, and like most thinkers, he slept but little, but that little was sound. In the morning he devoted an hour to meditation and then said mass, either at the cathedral or at his own house. After mass he took his breakfast of rye bread and milk and then went to work.

A bishop is a very busy man; he must receive the report of the clerk of the diocese, ordinarily a prebendary, every day; and nearly every day his grand-vicars. He has congregations to superintend, licenses to grant all ecclesiastical book-selling, to examine parish and diocesan catechisms, prayer-books, etc., charges to write, preachings, to authorize curés and mayors to make peace between a clerical correspondence and an administrative correspondence, on the one hand the government, on the other the holy see—a thousand matters of business.

What time these various affairs and his devotions and his breviary left him he gave first to the needy, the sick and

the afflicted; what time the afflicted, the sick and the needy left him he gave to labor. Sometimes he used a spade in his garden and sometimes he read and wrote. He had but one name for these two kinds of labor; he called them gardening. "The spirit is a garden," said he.

Toward noon, when the weather was good, he would go out and walk in the fields, or in the city, often visiting the cottages and cabins. He would be seen plodding along, wrapt in his thoughts, his eyes bent down, resting upon his long cane, wearing his violet doublet, wadded so as to be very warm, violet stockings and heavy shoes, and his flat hat, from the three corners of which hung the three golden grains of spikenard.

His coming made a fête. One would have said that he dispensed warmth and light as he passed along. Old people and children would come to their doors for the bishop as they would for the sun. He blessed and was blessed in return. Whoever was in need of anything was shown the way to his house.

Now and then he would stop and talk to the little boys and girls—and give a smile to their mothers. When he had money his visits were to the poor; when he had none he visited the rich.

As he made his cassock last a very long time, in order that it might not be perceived he never went out into the city without his violet doublet. In summer this was rather irksome.

On his return he dined. His dinner was like his breakfast.

At 8:30 o'clock in the evening he took supper with his sister, Mme. Magloire standing behind them and waiting on the table. Nothing could be more frugal than this meal. If, however, the bishop had one of his curés to supper, Mme. Magloire improved the occasion to serve her master with some excellent fish from the lakes, or some fine game from the mountain. Every curé was a pretext for a fine meal; the bishop did not interfere. With these exceptions, there was rarely seen upon his table more than boiled vegetables, or bread warmed with oil. And so it came to be a saying in the city: "When the bishop does not entertain a curé, he entertains a Trappist."

After supper he would chat for half an hour with Mdlle.

Baptistine and Mme. Magloire, and then go to his own room and write, sometimes upon loose sheets, sometimes on the margin of one of his folios. He was a well-read and even a learned man. He has left five or six very curious manuscripts behind him; among them is a dissertation upon this passage in Genesis: "In the beginning the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." He contrasts this with three other versions; the Arabic, which has: "The winds of God blew"; Flavius Josephus, who says: "A wind from on high fell upon all the earth"; and, finally, the Chaldean paraphrase of Onkelos, which reads: "A wind coming from God blew upon the face of the waters."

In another dissertation he examines the theological works of Hugo, Bishop of Ptolemais, a distant relative of the writer of this book, and proves that sundry little tracts, published in the last century under the pseudonym of Barleycourt, should be attributed to that prelate.

Sometimes in the midst of his reading, no matter what book he might have in his hands, he would suddenly fall into deep meditation, and when it was over he would write a few lines on whatever page was open before him. These lines often have no connection with the book in which they are written. We have under our own eyes a note written by him upon the margin of a quarto volume entitled: "Correspondence du Lord Germain avec les Généraux Clinton, Cornwallis, et les Amiraux de la Station de l'Amérique. A Versailles, chez Poincot, Libraire, et à Paris, chez Pissot, Quai des Augustins."

And this is the note:

Oh, Thou who art!

Ecclesiastes names Thee the Almighty; Maccabees names Thee Creator; the Epistle to the Ephesians names Thee Liberty; Baruch names Thee Immensity; the Psalms name Thee Wisdom and Truth; John names Thee Light; the Book of Kings names Thee Lord; Exodus calls Thee Providence; Leviticus, Holiness; Esdras, Justice; Creation calls Thee God; man names Thee Father; but Solomon names Thee Compassion, and that is the most beautiful of all Thy names.

Toward nine o'clock in the evening the two women were accustomed to retire to their chambers in the second story, leaving him until morning alone upon the lower floor.

Here it is necessary that we should give an exact idea of the dwelling of the Bishop of D——.

VI

HOW HE PROTECTED HIS HOUSE

THE house which he occupied consisted, as we have said, of a ground floor and a second story; three rooms on the ground floor, three on the second story, and an attic above. Behind the house was a garden of about a quarter of an acre. The two women occupied the upper floor; the bishop lived below. The first room, which opened upon the street, was his dining-room, the second was his bedroom, and the third his oratory. You could not leave the oratory without passing through the bedroom, and to leave the bedroom, you must pass through the dining-room. At one end of the oratory there was an alcove closed in, with a bed for occasions of hospitality. The bishop kept this bed for country curés when business or the wants of their parish brought them to D——.

The pharmacy of the hospital, a little building adjoining the house and extending into the garden, had been transformed into a kitchen and cellar.

There was also a stable in the garden, which was formerly the hospital kitchen, where the bishop now kept a couple of cows, and invariably, every morning, he sent half the milk they gave to the sick at the hospital. "I pay my tithes," said he.

His room was quite large, and was difficult to warm in bad weather. As wood is very dear at D——, he conceived the idea of having a room partitioned off from the cow-stable with a tight plank ceiling. In the coldest weather he passed his evenings there and called it his *winter parlor.*

In this winter parlor, as in the dining-room, the only furniture was a square, white, wooden table, and four straw chairs. The dining-room, however, was furnished with an old sideboard, stained red. A similar sideboard, suitably draped with white linen and imitation lace, served for the altar which decorated the oratory.

His rich penitents and the pious women of D—— had often contributed the money for a beautiful new altar for monseigneur's oratory; but he had always taken the money and given it to the poor. "The most beautiful of altars,"

said he, "is the soul of an unhappy man who is comforted and thanks God."

In his oratory he had two prie-dieu straw chairs, and an armchair, also of straw, in the bedroom. When he happened to have seven or eight visitors at once, the prefect, or the general, or the major of the regiment in the garrison, or some of the pupils of the little seminary, he was obliged to go to the stable for the chairs that were in the winter parlor, to the oratory for the prie-dieu, and to the bedroom for the armchair; in this way he could get together as many as eleven seats for his visitors. At each new visit a room was stripped.

It happened sometimes that there were twelve; then the bishop concealed the embarrassment of the situation by standing before the fire if it were winter, or by walking in the garden if it were summer.

There was another chair in the strangers' alcove, but it had lost half its straw, and had but three legs, so that it could be used only when standing against the wall. Mdlle. Baptistine had also, in her room, a very large, wooden easy-chair, that had once been gilded and covered with flowered silk,but as it had to be taken into her room through the window, the stairway being too narrow, it could not be counted among the movable furniture.

It had been the ambition of Mdlle. Baptistine to be able to buy a parlor lounge, with cushions of Utrecht velvet, roses on a yellow ground, while the mahogany should be in the form of swans' necks. But this would have cost at least 500 francs, and, as she had been able to save only 42 francs and 10 sous for the purpose in five years, she had finally given it up. But whoever does attain to his ideal?

Nothing could be plainer in its arrangements than the bishop's bed-chamber. A window, which was also a door, opening upon the garden; facing this the bed, an iron hospital-bed, with green serge curtains; in the shadow of the bed, behind a screen, the toilet utensils, still betraying the elegant habits of the man of the world; two doors, one near the chimney, leading into the oratory, the other near the bookcase, opening into the dining-room. The bookcase, a large closet with glass doors, filled with books; the fireplace cased with wood, painted to imitate marble, usually without fire; in the fireplace a pair of andirons, orna-

mented with two vases of flowers, once plated with silver, which was a kind of episcopal luxury; above the fireplace a copper crucifix, from which the silver was worn off, fixed upon a piece of threadbare black velvet in a wooden frame, from which the gilt was almost gone; near the window a large table with an inkstand, covered with confused papers and heavy volumes. In front of the table was the straw armchair and before the bed a prie-dieu from the oratory.

Two portraits in oval frames hung on the wall on either side of the bed. Small gilt inscriptions upon the background of the canvas indicated that the portraits represented: one, the Abbé de Chaliot, Bishop of St. Claude; the other, the Abbé Tourteau, Vicar-General of Agde, Abbé of Grandchamps, Order of Citeaux, diocese of Chartres. The bishop found these portraits when he succeeded to the hospital patients in this chamber and left them untouched. They were priests, and probably donors to the hospital—two reasons why he should respect them. All that he knew of these two personages was that they had been named by the King, the one to his bishopric, the other to his living on the same day, the 27th of April, 1785. Mme. Magloire having taken down the pictures to wipe off the dust, the bishop had found this circumstance written in a faded ink upon a little square piece of paper yellow with time, stuck with four wafers on the back of the portrait of the Abbé of Grandchamps.

He had at his window an antique curtain of coarse woolen stuff which finally became so old that, to save the expense of a new one, Mme. Magloire was obliged to put a large patch in the very middle of it. This patch was in the form of a cross. The bishop often called attention to it: "How fortunate that is," he would say.

Every room in the house, on the ground floor as well as in the upper story, without exception, was whitewashed, as is the custom in barracks and in hospitals.

However, in later years, as we shall see by and by, Mme. Magloire found under the wall-paper some paintings which decorated the apartment of Mdlle. Baptistine. Before it was a hospital, the house had been a sort of gathering place for the citizens, at which time these decorations were introduced. The floors of the chambers were paved with red brick, which were scoured every week, and before the beds

straw-matting was spread. In all respects the house was kept by the two women exquisitely neat from top to bottom. This was the only luxury that the bishop would permit. He would say, "That takes nothing from the poor."

We must confess that he still retained of what he had formerly, six silver dishes and a silver soup ladle, which Mme. Magloire contemplated every day with new joy as they shone on the coarse, white linen tablecloth. And as we are drawing the portrait of the Bishop of D—— just as he was, we must add that he had said, more than once: "It would be difficult for me to give up eating from silver."

With this silverware should be counted two large, massive silver candlesticks, which he inherited from a great-aunt. These candlesticks held two wax candles, and their place was upon the bishop's mantel. When he had any one to dinner Mme. Magloire lighted the two candles and placed the two candlesticks upon the table.

There was in the bishop's chamber, at the head of his bed, a small cupboard in which Mme. Magloire placed the six silver dishes and the great ladle every evening. But the key was never taken out of it.

The garden, which was somewhat marred by the unsightly structures of which we have spoken, was laid out with four walks, crossing at the drain-well in the centre. There was another walk round the garden, along the white wall which inclosed it. These walks left four square plats which were bordered with box. In three of them Mme. Magloire cultivated vegetables; in the fourth the bishop had planted flowers, and here and there were a few fruit trees. Mme. Magloire once said to him with a kind of gentle reproach: "Monseigneur, you are always anxious to make everything useful, but yet here is a plat that is of no use. It would be much better to have salads there than bouquets."

"Mme. Magloire," replied the bishop, "you are mistaken. "The beautiful is as useful as the useful." He added, after a moment's silence, "Perhaps more so."

This plat, consisting of three or four beds, occupied the bishop nearly as much as his books. He usually passed an hour or two there, trimming, weeding, and making holes here and there in the ground and planting seeds. He was as much averse to insects as a gardener would have wished.

He made no pretensions to botany, and knew nothing of groups or classification; he did not care in the least to decide between Tournefort and the natural method; he took no part, either for the utricles against the cotyledons, or for Jussieu against Linnæus. He did not study plants; he loved flowers. He had much respect for the learned, but still more for the ignorant; and, while he fulfilled his duty in both these respects, he watered his beds every summer evening with a tin watering-pot painted green.

Not a door in the house had a lock. The door of the dining-room, which, we have mentioned, opened into the cathedral grounds, was formerly loaded with bars and bolts like the door of a prison. The bishop had had all this iron work taken off, and the door, by night as well as by day, was closed only with a latch. The passer-by, whatever might be the hour, could open it with a simple push. At first the two women had been very much troubled at the door being never locked; but Mgr. de D—— said to them: "Have bolts on your own doors, if you like." They shared his confidence at last, or at least acted as if they shared it. Mme. Magloire alone had occasional attacks of fear. As to the bishop, the reason for this is explained, or at least pointed at, in these three lines written by him on the margin of a Bible: "This is the shade of meaning, the door of a physician should never be closed; the door of a priest should always be open."

In another book, entitled "Philosophie de la Science Medicale," he wrote this further note: "Am I not a physician as well as they? I also have my patients; first I have theirs, whom they call the sick; and then I have my own, whom I call the unfortunate."

Yet, again, he had written: "Ask not the name of him who asks you for a bed. It is especially he whose name is a burden to him who has need of an asylum."

It occurred to a worthy curé, I am not sure whether it was the Curé of Couloubroux or the Curé of Pompierry, to ask him one day, probably at the instigation of Mme. Magloire, if monseigneur were quite sure that there was not a degree of imprudence in leaving his door, day and night, at the mercy of whoever might wish to enter, and if he did not fear that some evil would befall a house so poorly defended. The bishop touched him gently on the

shoulder and said: "Nisi Dominus custodierit domum, in vanum vigilant que custodiunt eam." *

And then he changed the subject.

He very often said: "There is a bravery for the priest as well as a bravery for the colonel of dragoons. Only," added he, "ours should be quiet."

VII

CRAVATTE

THIS is the proper place for an incident which we must not omit, for it is one of those which most clearly shows what manner of man the Bishop of D—— was.

After the destruction of the band of Gaspard Bès, which had invested the gorges of Ollivolles, one of his lieutenants, Cravatte, took refuge in the mountains. He concealed himself for some time with his bandits, the remnant of the troop of Gaspard Bès, in the county of Nice, then made his way to Piedmont and suddenly reappeared in France in the neighborhood of Barcelonnette. He was first seen at Jauziers, then at Tuiles. He concealed himself in the caverns of the Joug de l'Aigle, from which he made descents upon the hamlets and villages by the ravines of Ubaye and Ubayette.

He even pushed as far as Embrun and one night broke into the cathedral and stripped the sacristy. His robberies desolated the country. The gendarmes were put upon his trail, but in vain. He always escaped; sometimes by forcible resistance. He was a bold wretch. In the midst of all this terror the bishop arrived. He was making his visit to Chastelar. The mayor came to see him and urged him to turn back. Cravatte held the mountain as far as Arche and beyond; it would be dangerous even with an escort. It would expose three or four poor gendarmes to useless dangers.

"And so," said the bishop, "I intend to go without an escort."

"Do not think of such a thing," exclaimed the mayor.

"I think so much of it that I absolutely refuse the gendarmes and I am going to start in an hour."

* Unless God protects a house they who guard it watch in vain.

"To start?"

"To start."

"Alone?"

"Alone."

"Monseigneur, you will not do it."

"There is on the mountain," replied the bishop, "a humble little commune that I have not seen for three years; and they are good friends of mine, kind and honest peasants. They own one goat out of thirty that they pasture. They make pretty woolen thread of various colors and they play their mountain airs on six-holed flutes. They need some one occasionally to tell them of the goodness of God. What would they say of a bishop who was afraid? What would they say if I should not go there?"

"But, monseigneur, the brigands?"

"True," said the bishop, "I am thinking of that. You are right. I may meet them. They, too, must need some one to tell them of the goodness of God."

"Monseigneur, but it is a band! a pack of wolves!"

"M. Mayor, perhaps Jesus has made me the keeper of that very flock. Who knows the ways of Providence?"

"Monseigneur, they will rob you."

"I have nothing."

"They will kill you."

"A simple old priest who passes along muttering his prayers? No, no; what good would it do them?"

"Oh, my good sir, suppose you should meet them!"

"I should ask them for alms for my poor."

"Monseigneur, do not go. In the name of heaven! you are exposing your life."

"M. Mayor," said the bishop, "that is just it. I am not in the world to care for my life, but for souls."

He would not be dissuaded. He set out, accompanied only by a child who offered to go as his guide. His obstinacy was the talk of the country, and all dreaded the result.

He would not take along his sister or Mme. Magloire. He crossed the mountain on a mule, met no one and arrived safe and sound among his "good friends," the shepherds. He remained there a fortnight, preaching, administering the holy rites, teaching and exhorting. When he was about to leave he resolved to chant a "Te Deum" with

pontifical ceremonies. He talked with the curé about it. But what could be done? There was no episcopal furniture. They could only place at his disposition a paltry village sacristy with a few old robes of worn-out damask, trimmed with imitation-galloon.

"No matter," said the bishop. "M. le Curé, at the sermon announce our 'Te Deum.' That will take care of itself."

All the neighboring churches were ransacked, but the assembled magnificence of these humble parishes could not have suitably clothed a single cathedral singer.

While they were in this embarrassment a large chest was brought to the parsonage and left for the bishop by two unknown horsemen, who immediately rode away. The chest was opened; it contained a cope of cloth of gold, a mitre ornamented with diamonds, an archbishop's cross, a magnificent crozier, all the pontifical raiment stolen a month before from the treasures of Our Lady of Embrun. In the chest was a paper on which were written these words: "Cravatte to Mgr. Bienvenu."

"I said that it would take care of itself," said the bishop. Then he added, with a smile: "To him who is contented with a curé's surplice God sends an archbishop's cope."

"Monseigneur," murmured the curé, with a shake of the head and a smile, "God—or the devil."

The bishop looked steadily upon the curé, and replied with authority: "God!"

When he returned to Chastelar all along the road the people came with curiosity to see him. At the parsonage in Chastelar he found Mdlle. Baptistine and Mme. Magloire waiting for him, and he said to his sister: "Well, was I not right? the poor priest went among those poor mountaineers with empty hands; he comes back with hands filled. I went forth placing my trust in God alone; I bring back the treasures of a cathedral."

In the evening before going to bed he said further: "Have no fear of robbers or murderers. Such dangers are without, and are but petty. We should fear ourselves. Prejudices are the real robbers; vices the real murderers. The great dangers are within us. What matters it what threatens our heads or our purses? Let us think only of what threatens our souls."

Then turning to his sister: "My sister, a priest should never take any precautions against his neighbor. What his neighbor does God permits. Let us confine ourselves to prayer to God when we think that danger hangs over us. Let us beseech Him, not for ourselves, but that our brother may not fall into crime on our account."

To sum up, events were rare in his life. We relate those we know of; but usually he passed his life in always doing the same things at the same hours. A month of his year was like an hour of his day.

As to what became of the "treasures" of the Cathedral of Embrun, it would embarrass us to be questioned on that point. There were among them very fine things, and very tempting, and very good to steal for the benefit of the unfortunate. Stolen they had already been by others. Half the work was done; it only remained to change the course of the theft and to make it turn to the side of the poor. We can say nothing more on the subject. Except that there was found among the bishop's papers a rather obscure note, which is possibly connected with this affair, that reads as follows: "The question is, whether this ought to be returned to the cathedral or to the hospital."

VIII

AFTER-DINNER PHILOSOPHY

THE senator heretofore referred to was an intelligent man, who had made his way in life with a directness of purpose which paid no attention to all those stumbling-blocks which constitute obstacles in men's paths, known as conscience, sworn faith, justice and duty; he had advanced straight to his object without once swerving in the line of his advancement and his interest. He had been formerly a *procureur,* mollified by success, and was not a bad man at all, doing all the little kindnesses that he could to his sons, sons-in-law, and relatives generally, and even to his friends; having prudently taken the pleasant side of life, and availed himself of all the benefits which were thrown in his way. Everything else appeared to him very stupid. He was sprightly and just enough of a scholar to think himself a disciple of Epicurus, while possibly he was only

a product of Pigault-Lebrun. He laughed readily and with gusto at infinite and eternal things, and at the "crotchets of the good bishop." He laughed at them sometimes with a patronizing air, before M. Myriel himself, who listened.

At some semi-official ceremony Count —— (this senator) and M. Myriel remained at dinner with the prefect. At dessert the senator, a little elevated, though always dignified, exclaimed: "Parbleu, M. Bishop; let us talk. It is difficult for a senator and a bishop to look each other in the eye without winking. We are two augurs. I have a confession to make to you; I have my philosophy."

"And you are right," answered the bishop. "As one makes his philosophy, so he rests. You are on a purple bed, M. Senator."

The senator, encouraged by this, proceeded: "Let us be good fellows."

"Good devils, even," said the bishop.

"I assure you," resumed the senator, "that the Marquis d'Argens, Pyrrho, Hobbes, and M. Naigeon are not rascals. I have all my philosophers in my library, gilt-edged."

"Like yourself, M. le Comte," interrupted the bishop.

The senator went on: "I hate Diderot; he is an idealogist, a demagogue, and a revolutionist, at heart believing in God, and more bigoted than Voltaire. Voltaire mocked at Needham, and he was wrong; for Needham's eels prove that God is useless. A drop of vinegar in a spoonful of flour supplied the *fiat lux*. Suppose the drop greater and the spoonful larger and you have the world. Man is the eel. Then what is the use of an Eternal Father? M. Bishop, the Jehovah hypothesis tires me. It is good for nothing except to produce people with scraggy bodies and empty heads. Down with this great All, who torments me! Hail, Zero! who leaves me quiet. Between us, to open my heart, and confess to my pastor, as I ought, I will confess that I have common-sense. My head is not turned with your Jesus, who preaches in every cornfield renunciation and self-sacrifice. It is the advice of a miser to beggars. Renunciation, for what? Self-sacrifice to what? I do not see that one wolf immolates himself for the benefit of another wolf. Let us dwell, then, with nature. We are at the summit, and let us have a higher philosophy. What is the use

of being in a higher position if we can't see further than another man's nose? Let us live gayly; for life is all we have. That man has another life, elsewhere, above, below, anywhere—I don't believe a single word of it. Ah! I am recommended to self-sacrifice and renunciation, that I should take care what I do; that I must break my head over questions of good and evil, justice and injustice; over the *fas* and the *nefas*. Why? Because I shall have to render an account for my acts. When? After death. What a fine dream! After I am dead it will take fine fingers to pinch me. I should like to see a shade grasp a handful of ashes. Let us who are initiated, and have raised the skirt of Isis, speak the truth; there is neither good nor evil; there is only vegetation. Let us seek for the real; let us dig into everything. Let us go to the bottom. We should scent out the truth, dig in the earth for it, and seize upon it. Then it gives you exquisite joy; then you grow strong and laugh. I am firmly convinced, M. Bishop, that the immortality of man is a will-o'-the-wisp. Oh! charming promise. Trust it if you will! Adam's letter of recommendation! We have souls, and are to become angels, with blue wings to our shoulders. Tell me, now, isn't it Tertullian who says that the blessed will go from one star to another? Well, we shall be the grasshoppers of the skies. And then we shall see God. Tut, tut, tut. All these heavens are silly. God is a monstrous myth. I shouldn't say that in the *Moniteur*, of course, but I whisper it among my friends. *Interpocula.* To sacrifice earth to paradise is to leave the substance for the shadow. I am not so stupid as to be the dupe of the Infinite. I am nothing; I call myself Count Nothing, Senator. Did I exist before my birth? No. Shall I, after my death? No. What am I? A little dust, aggregated by an organism. What have I to do on this earth? I have the choice to suffer or to enjoy. Where will suffering lead me? To nothing. But I shall have suffered. Where will enjoyment lead me? To nothing. But I shall have enjoyed. My choice is made. I must eat, or be eaten, and I choose to eat. It is better to be the tooth than the grass. Such is my philosophy. After which, as I tell you, there is the grave-digger—the pantheon for *us* —but all fall into the great gulf—the end; *finis:* total liquidation. This is the vanishing point. Death is dead,

believe me. I laugh at the idea that there is any one there that has anything to say to me. It is an invention of nurses; bugaboo for children; Jehovah for men. No, our morrow is night. Beyond the tomb are only equal nothings. You have been Sardanapalus, or you have been Vincent de Paul—that amounts to the same nothing. That is the truth of it. Let us live, then, above all things; use your personality while you have it. In fact, I tell you, M. Bishop, I have my philosophy and I have my philosophers. I do not allow myself to be entangled with nonsense. But it is necessary there should be something for those who are below us, the bare-foots, knife-grinders, and other wretches. Legends and chimeras are given them to swallow, about the soul, immortality, paradise, and the stars. They munch that; they spread it on their dry bread. He who has nothing besides has the good God—that is the least good he can have. I make no objection to it, but I keep M. Naigeon for myself. The good God is good for the people."

The bishop clapped his hands.

"That is the idea," he exclaimed. "This materialism is an excellent thing and truly marvelous; reject it who will. Ah! when one has it, he is a dupe no more; he does not stupidly allow himself to be exiled like Cato, or stoned like Stephen, or burned alive like Joan of Arc. Those who have succeeded in procuring this admirable materialism have the happiness of feeling that they are irresponsible, and of thinking that they can devour everything in quietness—places, sinecures, honors, power, rightly or wrongly acquired, lucrative recantations, useful treasons, savory capitulations of conscience, and that they will enter their graves with their digestion completed. How agreeable it is! I do not say that for you, M. Senator. Nevertheless, I can not but felicitate you. You great lords have, you say, a philosophy of your own, for your special benefit—exquisite, refined, accessible to the rich alone; good with all sauces, admirably seasoning the pleasures of life. This philosophy is found at great depths and brought up by special search. But you are good princes, and you are quite willing that the belief in the good God should be the philosophy of the people, much as goose with onions is the turkey with truffles of the poor."

IX

THE BROTHER PORTRAYED BY THE SISTER

TO afford an idea of the household of the Bishop of D——, and the manner in which these two good women subordinated their actions, thoughts, even their womanly instincts, so liable to disturbance, to the habits and projects of the bishop, so that he had not even to speak in order to express them, we can not do better than to copy here a letter from Mdlle. Baptistine to Mme. la Viscontesse de Boischevron, the friend of her childhood. This letter is in our possession:

D——, Dec. 16, 18—.

My Dear Madame—Not a day passes that we do not speak of you; that is customary enough with us, but we have now another reason. Would you believe that in washing and dusting the ceilings and walls Mme. Magloire has made some discoveries? At present our two chambers, which were hung with old paper, whitewashed, would not disparage a chateau in the style of your own. Mme. Magloire has torn off all the paper; it had something underneath. My parlor, where there is no furniture, and which we use to dry clothes in, is fifteen feet high, eighteen feet square, and has a ceiling, once painted and gilded, with beams like those of your house. This was covered over with canvas during the time it was used as a hospital; and then we have wainscoting of the time of our grandmothers. But it is my own room which you ought to see. Mme. Magloire has discovered, beneath at least ten thicknesses of paper, some pictures, which, though not good, are quite endurable. Telemachus received on horseback by Minerva is one; and then, again, he is in the gardens—I forget their name; another is where the Roman ladies resorted for a single night. I could say much more; I have Romans, men and women [*here a word is illegible*], and all their retinue. Mme. Magloire has cleaned it all, and this summer she is going to repair some little damages and varnish it, and my room will be a veritable museum. She also found, in a corner of the storehouse, two pier tables of antique style; they asked 2 crowns, or 6 livres, to regild them, but it is far better to give that to the poor; besides that, they are very ugly, and I much perfer a round mahogany table.

I am always happy, my brother is so good; he gives all he has to the poor and sick. We are full of cares; the weather is very severe in the winter; and one must do something for those who lack. We at least are warmed and lighted, and you know those are great comforts.

My brother has his peculiarities; when he talks he says that a bishop ought to be thus. Just think of it, that the door is never closed. Come in who will, he is at once my brother's guest; he fears nothing, not even in the night; he says that is his form of bravery.

He wishes me not to fear for him, nor that Mme. Magloire should; he exposes himself to every danger, and prefers that we should not even seem to be aware of it; one must know how to understand him.

He goes out in the rain, walks through the water, travels in winter; he has no fear of darkness or dangerous roads, or of those he may meet.

Last year he went all alone into a district infested with robbers. He would not take us. He was gone a fortnight, and when he came back, though we had thought him dead, nothing had happened to him, and he was quite well. He said: "See how they have robbed me!" And he opened a trunk, in which he had the jewels of the Embrun Cathedral, which the robbers had given him.

Upon that occasion—on the return—I could not keep from scolding him a little, taking care only to speak while the carriage made a noise, so that no one could hear us.

At first I used to say to myself—he stops for no danger, he is incorrigible. But now I have become used to it. I make signs to Mme. Magloire that she shall not oppose him, and he runs what risks he chooses. I call away Mme. Magloire, I go to my room, pray for him, and fall asleep. I am calm, for I know very well that if any harm happened to him it would be my death; I should go away to the good father with my brother and my bishop. Mme. Magloire has had more difficulty in getting used to what she calls his imprudence. Now the thing is settled; we pray together, we are afraid together, and we go to sleep. Should Satan even come into the house no one would interfere. After all, what is there to fear in this house? There is always One with us who is the strongest; Satan may visit our house, but the good God inhabits it.

That is enough for me. My brother has no need now even to speak a word. I understand him without his speaking, and we commend ourselves to Providence.

It must be so with a man whose soul is so noble.

I asked my brother for the information which you requested respecting the Faux family. You know how well he knows about it, and how much he remembers, for he was always a very good royalist, and this is really a very old Norman family, of the district of Caen. There are five centuries of a Raoul de Faux, Jean de Faux, and Thomas de Faux, who were of the gentry, one of whom was a Lord of Rochefort. The last was Guy Etienne Alexandre, who was a cavalry colonel, and held some rank in the light horse of Brittany. His daughter, Marie Louise, married Adrien Charles de Gramont, son of Duke Louis de Gramont, a peer of France, colonel of the Gardes Francaises and lieutenant-general of the army. It is written Faux, Fauq, and Faouq.

Will you not, my dear madame, ask for us the prayers of your holy relative, M. le Cardinal? As to your precious Sylvanie, she has done well not to waste the short time that she is with you in writing to me. She is well, you say; studies according to your wishes, and loves me still. That is all I could desire. Her remembrance, through you, reached me, and I was glad to receive it. My health is tolerably good; still, I grow thinner every day.

Farewell; my paper is filled and I must stop. With a thousand good wishes,

BAPTISTINE.

P. S.—Your little nephew is charming; do you remember that he will soon be five years old? He saw a horse pass yesterday on which they had put knee-caps, and he cried out: "What is that he has got on his knees?" The child is so pretty. His little brother drags an old broom about the room for a carriage and says "Hi!"

As this letter shows, these two women knew how to conform to the bishop's mode of life, with that woman's tact which understands a man better than he can comprehend himself. Beneath the gentle and frank manner of the Bishop of D——, which never changed, he sometimes performed great, daring, even grand acts, without seeming to be aware of it himself. They trembled, but did not interfere. Sometimes Mme. Magloire would venture a remonstrance beforehand; never at the time, or afterward; no one ever disturbed him by word or token in an action once begun. At certain times, when he had no need to say it, when, perhaps, he was hardly conscious of it, so complete was his artlessness, they vaguely felt that he was acting as bishop, and at such periods they were only two shadows in the house. They waited on him passively, and if to obey was to disappear, they disappeared. With charming and instinctive delicacy they knew that obtrusive attentions would annoy him; so, even when they thought him in danger, they understood, I will not say his thought, but his nature rather, to the degree of ceasing to watch over him. They intrusted him to God's keeping.

Besides, Baptistine said, as we have seen, that his death would be hers. Mme. Magloire did not say so, but she knew it.

X

THE BISHOP IN THE PRESENCE OF AN UNKNOWN LIGHT

A LITTLE while before the date of the letter quoted in the preceding pages the bishop performed an act which the whole town thought far more perilous than his excursion across the mountains infested by the bandits.

In the country near D—— there was a man who lived alone. This man, to state the startling fact without preface, had been a member of the National Convention. His name was G——.

The little circle of D—— spoke of the conventionist with a certain sort of horror. A conventionist, think of

it; that was in the time when folks "thee-and-thoued" one another, and said "citizen." This man came very near being a monster; he had not exactly voted for the execution of the King, but almost; he was half a regicide, and had been a terrible creature altogether. How was it, then, on the return of the legitimate princes, that they had not arraigned this man before the provost court? He would not have been beheaded, perhaps, but even if clemency were necessary he might have been banished for life; in fact, an example, etc., etc. Besides, he was an atheist, as all those people are. Babblings of geese against a vulture!

But was this G—— a vulture? Yes, if one should judge him by the savageness of his solitude. As he had not voted for the King's execution he was not included in the sentence of exile and could remain in France.

He lived about an hour's walk from the town, far from any hamlet or road, in a secluded ravine of a very wild valley. It was said he had a sort of resting place there, a hole, a den. He had no neighbors or even passers-by. Since he had lived there the path which led to the place had become overgrown, and people spoke of it as of the house of a hangman.

From time to time, however, the bishop reflectingly gazed upon the horizon at the spot where a clump of trees indicated the ravine of the aged conventionist, and he would say: "There lives a soul which is alone." And in the depths of his thoughts he would add: "I owe him a visit."

But this idea, we must confess, though it appeared natural at first, yet after a few moments' reflection seemed strange, impracticable, and almost repulsive. For at heart he shared the general impression, and the conventionist inspired him, he knew not how, with that sentiment which is the fringe of hatred and which the word "aversion" so well expresses.

However, the shepherd should not recoil from the diseased sheep. Ah, but what a sheep!

The good bishop was perplexed; sometimes he walked in that direction, but he returned.

At last one day the news was circulated in the town that the young herdsboy who served the Conventionist G—— in his retreat had come for a doctor; that the old wretch

was dying; that he was motionless and could not live through the night. "Thank God!" added many.

The bishop took his cane, put on his overcoat, because his cassock was badly worn, as we have said, and besides the night wind was evidently rising, and set out.

The sun was setting; it had nearly touched the horizon when the bishop reached the accursed spot. He felt a certain quickening of the pulse as he drew near the den. He jumped over a ditch, cleared a hedge, made his way through a brush fence, found himself in a dilapidated garden and after a bold advance across the open ground suddenly behind some high brushwood he discovered the retreat.

It was a low, poverty-stricken hut, small and clean, with a little vine nailed up in front.

Before the door, in an old chair on rollers, there sat a man with white hair, looking with smiling gaze upon the setting sun.

The young herdsboy stood near him, handing him a bowl of milk.

While the bishop was looking the old man raised his voice.

"Thank you," he said, "I shall need nothing more," and his smile changed from the sun to rest upon the boy.

The bishop stepped forward. At the sound of his footsteps the old man turned his head and his face expressed as much surprise as one can feel after a long life.

"This is the first time since I have lived here," said he, "that I have had a visitor. Who are you, monsieur?"

"My name is Bienvenu Myriel," the bishop replied.

"Bienvenu Myriel? I have heard that name before. Are you he whom the people call Mgr. Bienvenu?"

"I am."

The old man continued, half-smiling: "Then you are my bishop?"

"Possibly."

"Come in, monsieur."

The conventionist extended his hand to the bishop, but he did not take it. He only said: "I am glad to find that I have been misinformed. You do not appear to me very ill."

"Monsieur," replied the old man, "I shall soon be better." He paused and said: "I shall be dead in three hours."

Then he continued: "I am something of a physician; I know the steps by which death approaches; yesterday my feet only were cold; to-day the cold has crept to my knees, now it has reached the waist; when it touches the heart all will be over. The sunset is lovely, is it not? I had myself wheeled out to get a final look at nature. You can speak to me; that will not tire me. You do well to come to see a man who is dying. It is good that these moments should have witnesses. Every one has his fancy; I should like to live until the dawn, but I know I have scarcely life for three hours. It will be night, but what matters it; to finish is a very simple thing. One does not need morning for that. Be it so; I shall die in the starlight."

The old man turned toward the herdsboy: "Little one, go to bed; thou didst watch the other night; thou art weary."

The child went into the hut.

The old man followed him with his eyes, and added, as if speaking to himself: "While he is sleeping I shall die; the two slumbers keep fit company."

The bishop was not as much affected as he might have been; it was not his idea of godly death; we must tell all, for the little inconsistencies of great souls should be mentioned; he who had laughed so heartily at "his highness" was still slightly shocked at not being called monseigneur, and was almost tempted to answer "citizen." He felt a desire to use the brusque familiarity common enough with doctors and priests, but which was not customary with him.

This conventionist after all, this representative of the people, had been a power on the earth; and perhaps for the first time in his life the bishop felt himself in a humor to be severe. The conventionist, however, treated him with a modest consideration and cordiality in which perhaps might have been discerned that humility which is befitting to one so nearly dust unto dust.

The bishop, on his part, although he generally kept himself free from curiosity, which to his idea was almost offensive, could not avoid examining the conventionist with an attention for which, as it had not its source in sympathy, his conscience would have condemned him as to any other man; but a conventionist he looked upon as an outlaw, even to the law of charity.

G——, with his self-possessed manner, erect figure, and

vibrating voice, was one of those noble octogenarians who are the marvel of the physiologist. The Revolution produced many of these men equal to the epoch; one felt that here was a tested man. Though so near death, he preserved all the appearance of health. His bright glances, his firm accent, and the muscular movements of his shoulders seemed almost sufficient to disconcert death. Azrael, the Mohammedan angel of the sepulchre, would have turned back, thinking he had mistaken the door. G—— appeared to be dying because he wished to die. There was freedom in his agony; his legs only were paralyzed; his feet were cold and dead, but his head lived in full power of life and light. At this solemn moment G—— seemed like the king in the Oriental tale, flesh above and marble below. The bishop seated himself upon a stone near by. The beginning of their conversation was *ex abrupto.*

"I congratulate you," he said, in a tone of reprimand. "At least you did not vote for the execution of the King."

The conventionist did not seem to notice the bitter emphasis placed upon the words "at least." The smiles vanished from his face and he replied: "Do not congratulate me too much, monsieur; I did vote for the destruction of the tyrant."

And the tone of austerity confronted the tone of severity.

"What do you mean?" asked the bishop.

"I mean that man has a tyrant, ignorance. I voted for the abolition of that tyrant. That tyrant has begotten royalty, which is authority springing from the false, while science is authority springing from the true. Man should be governed by science."

"And conscience," added the bishop.

"The same thing; conscience is innate knowledge that we have."

M. Bienvenu listened with some amazement to this language, novel as it was to him.

The conventionist went on: "As to Louis XVI, I said no. I do not believe that I have the right to kill a man, but I feel it a duty to exterminate evil. I voted for the downfall of the tyrant; that is to say, for the abolition of prostitution for woman, of slavery for man, of night for the child. In voting for the Republic I voted for that; I voted for fraternity, for harmony, for light. I assisted in cast-

ing down prejudices and errors; their downfall brings light! We caused the old world to fall! the old world, a vase of misery, reversed, becomes an urn of joy to the human race."

"Joy alloyed," said the bishop.

"You might say joy troubled, and, at present, after this fatal return of the past which we call 1814, joy disappeared. Alas! the work was imperfect, I admit; we demolished the ancient order of things physically, but not entirely in the idea. To destroy abuses is not enough; habits must be changed. The windmill has gone, but the wind is there yet."

"You have demolished. To demolish may be useful, but I distrust a demolition effected in anger!"

"Justice has its anger, M. Bishop, and the wrath of justice is an element of progress. Whatever may be said matters not; the French Revolution is the greatest step in advance taken by mankind since the advent of Christ; incomplete it may be, but it is sublime. It loosened all the secret bonds of society, it softened all hearts, it calmed, appeased, enlightened; it made the waves of civilization to flow over the earth. It was good. The French Revolution is the consecration of humanity."

The bishop could not help murmuring: "Yes, '93!"

The conventionist raised himself in his chair with a solemnity wellnigh mournful, and, as well as a dying person could exclaim, he exclaimed: "Ah! you are there! '93! I was expecting that. A cloud had been forming for 1,500 years; at the end of fifteen centuries it burst. You condemn the thunderbolt."

Without, perhaps, acknowledging it to himself, the bishop felt that he had been touched; however, he made the best of it, and replied: "The judge speaks in the name of justice, the priest in the name of pity, which is only a more exalted justice. A thunderbolt should not be mistaken."

And he added, looking fixedly at the conventionist: "Louis XVII?"

The conventionist stretched out his hand and seized the bishop's arm.

"Louis XVII. Let us see! For whom do you weep?—for the innocent child? It is well; I weep with you. For the royal child? I ask time to reflect. To my view the

brother of Cartouche, an innocent child, hung by a rope under his arms in the Place de Grève till he died, for the sole crime of being the brother of Cartouche, is a no less sad sight than the grandson of Louis XV, an innocent child, murdered in the tower of the temple for the sole crime of being the grandson of Louis XV."

"Monsieur," said the bishop, "I dislike this coupling of names."

"Cartouche, or Louis XV; for which are you concerned?"

There was a moment of silence; the bishop regretted almost that he had come, and yet he felt strangely and inexplicably moved.

The conventionist resumed: "Oh, M. Priest! you do not love the harshness of the truth, but Christ loved it. He took a scourge and purged the temple; his flashing whip was a rude speaker of truths; when he said 'Sinite parvulos' he made no distinction among the little ones. He was not pained at coupling the dauphin of Barabbas with the dauphin of Herod. Monsieur, innocence is its own crown! Innocence has only to act to be noble! She is as august in rags as in the fleur de lys."

"That is true," said the bishop, in a low tone.

"I repeat," continued the old man; "you have mentioned Louis XVII. Let us weep together for all the innocent, for all the martyrs, for all the children, for the low as well as for the high. I am one of them, but then, as I have told you, we must go further back than '93, and our tears must begin before Louis XVII. I will weep for the children of kings with you, if you will weep with me for the little ones of the people."

"I weep for all," said the bishop.

"Equally," exclaimed G——, "and if the balance inclines, let it be on the side of the people; they have suffered longer."

There was silence again, broken at last by the old man. He raised himself upon one elbow, took a pinch of his cheek between his thumb and his bent forefinger, as one does mechanically in questioning and forming an opinion, and addressed the bishop with a look full of all the energies of agony. It was almost an anathema.

"Yes, monsieur, it is for a long time that the people have been suffering, and then, sir, that is not all: why do you

come to question me and to speak to me of Louis XVII? I do not know you. Since I have been in this region I have lived within these walls alone, never passing beyond them, seeing none but this child who helps me. Your name has, it is true, reached me confusedly, and I must say not very indistinctly, but that matters not. Adroit men have so many ways of imposing upon this good simple people. For instance, I did not hear the sound of your carriage. You left it, doubtless, behind the thicket, down there at the branching of the road. You have told me that you were the bishop, but that tells me nothing about your moral personality. Now, then, I repeat my question: Who are you? You are a bishop, a prince of the Church, one of those men who are covered with gold, with insignia, and with wealth, who have fat livings—the See of D——, 15,000 francs regular, 10,000 francs contingent, total 25,000 francs—who have kitchens, who have retinues, who give good dinners, who eat moor-hens on Friday, who strut about in your gaudy coach like peacocks, with lackeys before and lackeys behind, and who have palaces, and who roll in your carriages in the name of Jesus Christ who went barefooted. You are a prelate; rents, palaces, horses, valets, a good table, all the sensualities of life, you have these, like all the rest, and you enjoy them like all the rest; very well, but that says too much or not enough; that does not enlighten me as to your intrinsic worth, that which is peculiar to yourself, you who come probably with the claim of bringing me wisdom. To whom am I speaking? Who are you?"

The bishop bowed his head and replied: "Vermis sum."

"A worm of the earth in a carriage!" grumbled the old man.

It was the turn of the conventionist to be haughty and of the bishop to be humble.

The bishop replied with mildness: "Monsieur, be it so. But explain to me how my carriage, which is there a few steps behind the trees, how my good table and the moor-fowl that I eat on Friday, how my 25,000 livres of income, how my palace and my lackeys prove that pity is not a virtue, that kindness is not a duty, and that '93 was not inexorable?"

The old man passed his hand across his forehead as if to dispel a cloud.

"Before answering you," said he, "I beg your pardon. I have done wrong, monsieur; you are in my house, you are my guest. I owe you courtesy. You are discussing my ideas; it is fitting that I confine myself to combating your reasoning. Your riches and your enjoyments are advantages that I have over you in the debate, but it is not in good taste to avail myself of them. I promise you to use them no more."

"I thank you," said the bishop.

G—— went on: "Let us get back to the explanation that you asked of me. Where were we? What were you saying to me? That '93 was inexorable?"

"Inexorable, yes," said the bishop. "What do you think of Marat clapping his hands at the guillotine?"

"What do you think of Bossuet chanting the 'Te Deum' over the dragonnades?"

The answer was severe, but it reached its aim with the keenness of a dagger. The bishop was staggered, no reply presented itself; but it shocked him to hear Bossuet spoken of in that manner. The best men have their fetiches, and sometimes they feel almost crushed at the little respect that logic shows them.

The conventionist began to gasp; the agonizing asthma, which mingles with the latest breath, made his voice broken; nevertheless, his soul yet appeared perfectly lucid in his eyes. He continued: "Let us have a few more words here and there—I would like it. Outside of the Revolution which, taken as a whole, is an immense human affirmation, '93 alas! is a reply. You think it inexorable, but the whole monarchy, monsieur? Carrier is a bandit; but what name do you give to Montrevel? Fouquier-Tinville is a wretch; but what is your opinion of Lamoignon Bâville? Maillard is frightful, but Saulx Tavannes, if you please? Le père Duchêne is ferocious, but what epithet will you furnish me for Le père Letellier? Jourdan-Coupe-Tête is a monster, but less than the Marquis of Louvois. Monsieur, monsieur, I lament Marie Antoinette, archduchess and queen, but I lament also that poor Huguenot woman who, in 1685, under Louis le Grand, monsieur, while nursing her child, was stripped to the waist and tied to a post, while her child was held before her; her breast swelled with milk and her heart with anguish; the little one, weak and famished, seeing

the breast, cried with agony; and the executioner said to the woman, to the nursing mother: 'Recant!' giving her the choice between the death of her child and the death of her conscience. What say you to this Tantalus torture adapted to a mother? Monsieur, forget not this; the French Revolution had its reasons. Its wrath will be pardoned by the future; its result is a better world. From its most terrible blows comes a caress for the human race. I must be brief. I must stop. I have too good a cause; and I am dying."

And, ceasing to look at the bishop, the old man completed his idea in these few tranquil words: "Yes, the brutalities of progress are called revolutions. When they are over this is recognized; that the human race has been harshly treated, but that it has advanced."

The conventionist thought that he had borne down successively one after the other all the interior intrenchments of the bishop. There was one left, however, and from this, the last resource of Mgr. Bienvenu's resistance, came forth these words, in which nearly all the rudeness of the exordium reappeared: "Progress ought to believe in God. The good can not have an impious servitor. An atheist is an evil leader of the human race."

The old representative of the people did not answer. He was trembling. He looked up into the sky and a tear gathered slowly in his eye. When the lid was full the tear rolled down his livid cheek, and he said, almost stammering, low and talking to himself, his eye lost in the depths: "O thou! O ideal! thou alone dost exist!"

The bishop felt a kind of inexpressible emotion.

After brief silence the old man raised his finger toward heaven and said: "The infinite exists. It is there. If the infinite had no *me,* the *me* would be its limit; it would not be the infinite; in other words, it would not be. But it is. Then it has a *me.* This *me* of the infinite is God."

The dying man pronounced these last words in a loud voice and with a shudder of ecstasy, as if he saw some one. When he ceased his eyes closed. The effort had exhausted him. It was evident that he had lived through in one minute the few hours that remained to him. What he had said had brought him near to him who is in death. The last moment was at hand.

The bishop perceived it; time was pressing.

He had come as a priest; from extreme coldness he had passed by degrees to extreme emotion; he looked upon those closed eyes, he took that old, wrinkled and icy hand and drew closer to the dying man.

"This hour is the hour of God. Do you not think it would be a source of regret if we should have met in vain?"

The conventionist reopened his eyes. Calmness was imprinted upon his face, where there had been a cloud.

"M. Bishop," said he, with a deliberation which perhaps came still more from the dignity of his soul than from the ebb of his strength, "I have passed my life in meditation, study, and contemplation. I was sixty years old when my country called me and ordered me to take part in her affairs. I obeyed. There were abuses, I fought them; there were tyrannies, I destroyed them; there were rights and principles, I proclaimed and confessed them. The soil was invaded, I defended it; France was threatened, I offered her my breast. I was not rich; I am poor. I was one of the masters of the state, the vaults of the bank were piled with specie, so that we had to strengthen the walls or they would have fallen under the weight of gold and of silver; I dined in the Rue de l'Arbre-Sec at twenty-two sous for the meal. I succored the oppressed, I solaced the suffering. True, I tore the drapery from the altar; but it was to stanch the wounds of the country. I have always supported the forward march of the human race toward the light, and I have sometimes resisted a progress which was without pity. I have, on occasion, protected my own adversaries, your friends. There is at Peteghem, in Flanders, at the very place where the Merovingian kings had their summer palace, a monastery of Urbanists, the Abbey of Sainte Claire in Beaulieu, which I saved in 1793; I have done my duty according to my strength, and the good that I could. After which I was hunted, hounded, pursued, persecuted, slandered, railed at, spit upon, cursed, proscribed. For many years now, with my white hairs, I have perceived that many people believed they had a right to despise me; to the poor, ignorant crowd I have the face of the damned, and I accept, hating no man myself, the isolation of hatred. Now I am eighty-six years old; I am about to die. What have you come to ask of me?"

"Your benediction," said the bishop. And he fell upon his knees.

When the bishop raised his head the face of the old man had become august. He had expired.

The bishop went home deeply absorbed in thought. He spent the whole night in prayer. The next day some persons, emboldened by curiosity, tried to talk with him of the conventionist, G——; he merely pointed to heaven.

From that moment he redoubled his tenderness and brotherly love for the weak and the suffering.

Every allusion to "that old scoundrel G——" threw him into a strange reverie. No one could say that the passage of that soul before his own, and the reflex of that grand conscience upon his own, had not had its effect upon his approach to perfection.

The "pastoral visit" was, of course, an occasion for criticism by the little local coteries of the place.

"Was the bedside of such a man as that the place for a bishop? Of course he could expect no conversion there. All these revolutionists are backsliders. Then, why go there? What had he been there to see? He must have been very curious to see a soul carried away by the devil."

One day a dowager, of that impertinent variety who think themselves witty, addressed this sally to him: "Monseigneur, people ask when your grandeur will have the red bonnet?" "Oh! oh! that is a high color," replied the bishop. "Luckily those who despise it in a bonnet venerate it in a hat."

XI

A QUALIFICATION

WE should be very much deceived if we supposed from this that Mgr. Bienvenu was "a philosopher bishop," or "a patriot curé." His meeting, which we might almost call his communion with the conventionist, G——, left him in a state of astonishment which rendered him still more charitable; that was all.

Although Mgr. Bienvenu was anything but a politician, we ought here perhaps to point out very briefly his position in relation to the events of the day, if we may suppose that Mgr. Bienvenu ever thought of having a position.

For this we must go back a few years.

Some time after the elevation of M. Myriel to the episcopacy the Emperor made him a baron of the empire at the same time with several of the bishops. The arrest of the Pope took place, as we know, on the night of the 5th of July, 1809; on that occasion M. Myriel was called by Napoleon to the synod of the bishops of France and Italy convoked at Pairs. This synod was held at Notre Dame, and commenced its sessions on the 15th of June, 1811, under the presidency of Cardinal Fesch. M. Myriel was one of the ninety-five bishops who were present. But he attended only one sitting and three or four private conferences. Bishop of a mountain diocese, living so near to nature, in rusticity and privation, he seemed to bring among these eminent personages ideas that changed the temperature of the synod. He returned very soon to D——. When asked about this sudden return, he answered: "I annoyed them. The free air went in with me. I had the effect of an open door."

Another time he said: "What would you have? Those prelates are princes. I am only a poor peasant bishop."

The fact is that he was disliked. Among other strange things he dropped the remark one evening when he happened to be at the house of one of his colleagues of the highest rank: "What fine clocks! fine carpets! fine liveries! This must be very comfortable! Oh! how unwilling I should be to have all these superfluities crying forever in my ears: 'There are people who hunger! there are people who are cold! there are poor! there are poor!' "

We must say, by the way, that the hatred of luxury is not an intelligent hatred. It implies a hatred of the arts. Nevertheless, among churchmen, beyond their rites and ceremonies, luxury is a crime. It seems to disclose habits which are not truly charitable. A wealthy priest is a contradiction. He ought to keep himself near the poor. But who can be in contact continually, by night as well as day, with all distresses, all misfortunes, all privations, without taking upon himself a little of that holy poverty, like the dust of a journey? Can you imagine a man near a fire who does not feel warm? Can you imagine a laborer working constantly at a furnace who has not a hair burned, nor a nail blackened, nor a drop of sweat, nor a speck of ashes

on his face? The first proof of charity in a priest, and especially a bishop, is poverty.

That is, doubtless, the view which the Bishop of D—— took of it.

It must not be thought, however, that he took part in the delicate matters which would be called "the ideas of the age." He had little to do with the theological quarrels of the moment, and kept his peace on questions where the Church and the State were compromised; but if he had been pressed he would have been found rather ultramontane than Gallican. As we are drawing a portrait and can make no concealment we are compelled to add that he was very cool toward Napoleon in the decline of his power. After 1813 he acquiesced in or applauded all the hostile manifestations. He refused to see him as he passed on his return from the Island of Elba and declined to order in his diocese public prayers for the Emperor during the Hundred Days.

Besides his sister, Mdlle. Baptistine, he had two brothers; one a general, the other a prefect. He wrote occasionally to both. He felt a coolness toward the first, because, being in command in Provence, at the time of the landing at Cannes, the general placed himself at the head of 1,200 men and pursued the Emperor as if he wished to let him escape. His correspondence was more affectionate with the other brother, the ex-prefect, a brave and worthy man who lived in retirement at Paris, in the Rue Cassette.

Even Mgr. Bienvenu then had his hour of party spirit, his hour of bitterness, his clouds. The shadow of the passions of the moment passed over this great and gentle spirit in its occupation with eternal things. Certainly, such a man deserved to escape political opinions. Let no one misunderstand our idea; we do not confound what are called "political opinions" with that grand aspiration after progress, with that sublime, patriotic, democratic and human faith, which, in our days, should be the very foundation of all generous intelligence. Without entering into questions which have only an indirect bearing upon the subject of this book, we simply say, it would have been well if Mgr. Bienvenu had not been a royalist and if his eyes had never been turned for a single instant from that serene contemplation where, steadily shining, above the fictions and the hatreds

of this world, above the stormy ebb and flow of human affairs, are seen those three pure luminaries—truth, justice, and charity.

Although we hold that it was not for a political function that God created Mgr. Bienvenu, we could have understood and admired a protest in the name of right and liberty, a fierce opposition, a perilous and just resistance to Napoleon when he was all-powerful. But what is pleasing to us toward those who are rising is less pleasing toward those who are falling. We do not admire the combat when there is no danger; and, in any case, the combatants of the first hour have alone the right to be the exterminators in the last. He who has not been a determined accuser during prosperity ought to hold his peace in the presence of adversity. He only who denounces the success at one time has a right to proclaim the justice of the downfall. As for ourselves, when Providence intervened and struck the blow, we took no part; 1812 began to disarm us. In 1813 the cowardly breach of silence on the part of that taciturn Corps Legislatif, emboldened by catastrophe, was worthy only of indignation and it was base to applaud it; in 1814, from those traitorous marshals, from that senate passing from one baseness to another, insulting where they had deified, from that idolatry, recoiling and spitting upon its idol, it was a duty to turn away in disgust; in 1815, when the air was filled with the final disasters, when France felt the thrill of their sinister approach, when Waterloo could already be dimly perceived opening before Napoleon, the sorrowful acclamations of the army and of the people to the condemned of destiny, were no subjects for laughter, and, making every reservation as to the despot, a heart like that of the Bishop of D—— ought not, perhaps, to have refused to see what was august and touching, on the brink of the abyss, in the last embrace of a great nation and a great man.

To conclude: he was always and in everything just, true, equitable, intelligent, humble, and worthy; beneficent and benevolent, which is another beneficence. He was a priest, a sage, and a man. We must say that, even in those political opinions which we have been criticising and which we are disposed to judge almost severely, he was tolerant and yielding, perhaps more than we who now speak. The door-

keeper of the city hall had been placed there by the Emperor. He was an old subaltern officer of the Old Guard, a legionary of Austerlitz and as stanch a Bonapartist as the eagle. This poor fellow sometimes thoughtlessly allowed words to escape him which the law at that time defined as *seditious matters.* Since the profile of the Emperor had disappeared from the Legion of Honor he had never worn his badge, as he said, that he might not be compelled to bear his cross. In his devotion he had himself removed the imperial effigy from the cross that Napoleon had given to him; it left a hole and he would put nothing in its place. "Better die," said he, "than wear the three toads over my heart." He was always railing loudly at Louis XVIII. "Old gouty-foot with his English spatterdashes!" he would say, "let him go to Prussia with his goat's-beard," happy to unite in the same imprecation the two things that he most detested, Prussia and England. He said so much that he lost his place. There he was without bread and in the streets with his wife and children. The bishop sent for him, scolded him a little and made him doorkeeper in the cathedral.

In nine years, by dint of holy works and gentle manners, Mgr. Bienvenu had filled the city of D—— with a kind of tender and filial veneration. Even his conduct toward Napoleon had been accepted and pardoned in silence by the people, a good, weak flock, who adored their Emperor, but who loved their bishop.

XII

SOLITUDE OF MGR. BIENVENU

THERE is almost always a squad of young abbés about a bishop as there is a flock of young officers about a general. They are what the charming St. Francis de Sales somewhere calls "white-billed priests." Every profession has its aspirants who make up the cortége of those who are at the summit. No power is without its worshipers, no fortune without its court. The seekers of the future revolve about the splendid present. Every capital, like every general, has its staff. Every bishop of influence has his patrol of undergraduates, cherubs who go the rounds and

keep order in the episcopal palace and who mount guard over monseigneur's smile. To please a bishop is a foot in the stirrup for a sub-deacon. One must make his own way; the apostolate never disdains the canonicate.

And as there are elsewhere rich coronets so there are in the Church rich mitres. There are bishops who stand well at court, rich, well endowed, adroit, accepted of the world, knowing how to pray, doubtless, but knowing also how to ask favors; making themselves without scruple the viaduct of advancement for a whole diocese; bonds of union between the sacristy and diplomacy; rather abbés than priests, prelates rather than bishops. Lucky are they who can get near them. Men of influence as they are, they rain about them, upon their families and favorites, and upon all of these young men who please them, fat parishes, livings, archdeaconates, almonries, and cathedral functions—steps toward episcopal dignities. In advancing themselves they advance their satellites; it is a whole solar system in motion. The rays of their glory empurple their suite. Their prosperity scatters its crumbs to those who are behind the scenes in the shape of nice little promotions. The larger the diocese of the patron the larger the curacy for the favorite. And then there is Rome. A bishop who can become an archbishop, an archbishop who can become a cardinal, leads you to the conclave; you enter into the rota, you have the pallium, you are auditor, you are chamberlain, you are monseigneur, and from grandeur to eminence there is only a step, and between eminence and holiness there is nothing but the whiff of a ballot. Every cowl may dream of the tiara. The priest is, in our days, the only man who can regularly become a king; and what a king! the supreme king. So, what a nursery of aspirations is a seminary. How many blushing chorus-boys, how many young abbés have the ambitious dairy-maid's pail of milk on their heads! Who knows how easily ambition disguises itself under the name of a calling, possibly in good faith, and deceiving itself, saint that it is!

Mgr. Bienvenu, a humble, poor, private person, was not counted among the rich mitres. This was plain from the entire absence of young priests about him. We have seen that at Paris "he did not take." No glorious future dreamed of alighting on this solitary old man. No young

ambition was foolish enough to ripen in his shadow. His canons and his grand-vicars were good old men, rather common like himself, and, like him, immured in that diocese, from which there was no road to promotion, and they resembled their bishop, with this difference, that they were finished and he was perfected. The impossibility of getting on under Mgr. Bienvenu was so plain that, as soon as they were out of the seminary, the young men ordained by him procured recommendations to the Archbishop of Aix or of Auch, and went immediately to present them. For, we repeat, men like advancement. A saint who is addicted to abnegation is a dangerous neighbor; he is very likely to communicate to you, by contagion, an incurable poverty, an anchylosis of the articulations necessary to advancement, and, in fact, more renunciation than you would like; and men flee from this contagious virtue. Hence the isolation of Mgr. Bienvenu. We live in a sad society. Succeed; that is the advice which falls, drop by drop, from the overhanging corruption.

We may say, by the way, that success is a hideous thing. Its counterfeit of merit deceives men. To the mass, success has almost the same appearance as supremacy. Success, that pretender to talent, has a dupe—history. Juvenal and Tacitus only reject it. In our days, a philosophy which is almost an official has entered into its service, wears its livery, and waits in its ante-chamber. Success; that is the theory. Prosperity supposes capacity. Win in the lottery and you are an able man. The victor is venerated. To be born with a caul is everything. Have but luck, and you will have the rest; be fortunate and you will be thought great. Beyond the five or six great exceptions, which are the wonder of their age, contemporary admiration is nothing but shortsightedness. Gilt is gold. To be a chance comer is no drawback, provided you have improved your chances. The common herd is an old Narcissus, who adores himself, and who applauds the common. That mighty genius, by which one becomes a Moses, an Æschylus, a Dante, a Michelangelo, or a Napoleon, the multitude assigns at once and by acclamation to whoever succeeds in his object, whatever it may be. Let a notary rise to be a deputy; let a sham Corneille write *Tiridate;* let a eunuch come into the possession of a harem; let a military Prud-

homme accidentally win the decisive battle of an epoch; let an apothecary invent pasteboard soles for army shoes, and lay up by selling this pasteboard instead of leather for the army of the Sambre-et-Meuse, 400,000 livres in the funds; let a pack-pedler espouse usury and bring her to bed of 7,000,000 or 8,000,000 francs, of which he is the father and she is the mother; let a preacher become a bishop by talking through his nose; let the steward of a good house become so rich on leaving service that he is made minister of finance —men call that genius, just as they call the face of Mousqueton, beauty and the bearing of Claude, majesty. They confound the radiance of the stars of heaven with the radiations which a duck's foot leaves in the mud.

XIII

WHAT HE BELIEVED

WE need not examine the Bishop of D—— from an orthodox point of view. Before such a soul we feel only in the humor of respect. The conscience of an upright man should be taken for granted. Moreover, given certain natures and we admit the possible development of all the beauties of human virtue in a faith different from our own.

What he thought of this dogma or that mystery are secrets of the interior faith known only in the tomb where souls enter stripped of all externals. But we are sure that religious difficulties never resulted with him in hypocrisy. No corruption is possible with the diamond. He believed as much as he could. *Credo in Patrem,* he often exclaimed; and, besides, he derived from his good deeds that measure of satisfaction which meets his demands of conscience, and which says in a low voice, "Thou art with God."

We think it our duty to notice that, outside of, and, so to say, beyond his faith, the bishop had an excess of love. It is on that account, *quia multum amavit,* that he was deemed vulnerable by "serious men," "sober persons," and "reasonable people"; favorite phrases in our sad world, where egotism receives its keynote from pedantry. What was this excess of love? It was a serene benevolence, overflowing men, as we have already indicated, and, on occasion,

extending to inanimate things. He lived without disdain. He was indulgent to God's creation. Every man, even the best, has some inconsiderate severity which he holds in reserve for animals. The Bishop of D—— had none of this severity peculiar to most priests. He did not go so far as did the Brahmin, but he appeared to have pondered over these words of Ecclesiastes: "Who knows whither goeth the spirit of the beast?" Ugliness of aspect, monstrosities of instinct, did not trouble or irritate him. He was moved and afflicted by it. He seemed to be thoughtfully seeking beyond the apparent life for its cause, its explanation or its excuse. He seemed at times to ask changes of God. He seemed without passion, and with the eye of a linguist deciphering a palimpsest, the portion of chaos which there is yet in nature. These reveries sometimes drew from him strange words. One morning he was in his garden, and thought himself alone; but his sister was walking behind him. All at once he stopped and looked at something on the ground. It was a large, black, hairy, horrible spider. His sister heard him say: "Poor thing! it is not his fault!"

Why not relate this almost divine child-likeness of goodness? Puerilities, perhaps, but these sublime puerilities were those of St. Francis of Assisi and of Marcus Aurelius. One day he received a sprain rather than crush an ant.

So lived this upright man. Sometimes he went to sleep in his garden, and then there was nothing more venerable.

Mgr. Bienvenu had been formerly, according to the accounts of his youth and even of his early manhood, a passionate, perhaps a violent, man. His universal tenderness was less an instinct of nature than the result of a strong conviction filtered through life into his heart, slowly dropping in upon him, thought by thought; for a character, as well as a rock, may be worn into by drops of water. Such marks are ineffaceable; such formations are indestructible.

In 1815, we think we have already said, he attained his seventy-sixth year, but he did not appear to be more than sixty. He was not tall; he was somewhat fleshy, and frequently took long walks that he might not become more so; he had a firm step and was but little bowed; a circumstance from which we do not claim to draw any conclusion. Gregory XVI at eighty years was erect and smiling, which did

not prevent him from being a bad bishop. Mgr. Bienvenu had what people call "a fine head," but so benevolent that you forgot that it was fine.

When he talked with that infantile gayety that was one of his graces, and of which we have already spoken, all felt at ease in his presence, and from his whole person joy seemed to radiate. His ruddy and fresh complexion, and his white teeth, all of which were well preserved and which he showed when he laughed, gave him that open and easy air which makes us say of a man, he is a good fellow; and of an old man, he is a good man. This was, we remember, the effect he produced on Napoleon. At the first view, and to one who saw him for the first time, he was nothing more than a good man. But if one spent a few hours with him and saw him in a thoughtful mood, little by little the good man became transfigured and became ineffably imposing; his large and serious forehead, rendered noble by his white hair, became noble also by meditation; majesty was developed from this goodness, yet the radiance of goodness remained; and one felt something of the emotion that he would experience in seeing a smiling angel slowly spread his wings without ceasing to smile. Respect, unutterable respect, penetrated you by degrees and made its way to your heart; and you felt that you had before you one of those strong, tried, and indulgent souls where the thought is so great that it can not be other than gentle.

As we have seen, prayer, celebration of the religious offices, alms, consoling the afflicted, the cultivation of a little piece of ground, fraternity, frugality, self-sacrifice, confidence, study and work filled up each day of his life. Filled up is exactly the word; and, in fact, the bishop's day was full to the brim with good thoughts, good words, and good actions. Nevertheless, it was not complete if cold or rainy weather prevented his passing an hour or two in the evening, when the two women had retired, in his garden before going to sleep. It seemed as if it were a sort of rite with him to prepare himself for sleep by meditating in presence of the great spectacle of the starry firmament. Sometimes at a late hour of the night, if the two women were awake, they would hear him slowly promenading the walks. He was there alone with himself, collected, tranquil, adoring, comparing the serenity of his heart with the

serenity of the skies, moved in the darkness by the visible splendors of the constellations and the invisible splendor of God, opening his soul to the thoughts which fall from the Unknown. In such moments, offering up his heart at the hour when the flowers of night exhale their perfume, lighted like a lamp in the centre of the starry night, expanding his soul in ecstasy in the midst of the universal radiance of creation, he could not himself, perhaps, have told what was passing in his own mind; he felt something depart from him and something descend upon him; mysterious interchanges of the depths of the soul with the depths of the universe.

He contemplated the grandeur and the presence of God; the eternity of the future, strange mystery; the eternity of the past mystery, yet more strange; all the infinities deep-hidden in every direction about him; and, without essaying to comprehend the incomprehensible, he saw it. He did not study God; he was dazzled by the thought. He reflected upon these magnificent unions of atoms which give visible forms to nature, revealing forces in establishing them, creating individualities in unity, proportions in extension, the innumerable in the infinite and through light producing beauty. These unions are forming and dissolving continually; thence life and death.

He would sit upon a wooden bench, leaning against a broken trellis, and look at the stars through the irregular outlines of his fruit trees. This quarter of an acre of ground, so poorly cultivated, so cumbered with shed and ruins, was dear to him and satisfied him.

What more was needed by this old man who divided the leisure hours of his life, where he had so little leisure, between gardening in the daytime and contemplation at night? Was not this narrow inclosure, with the sky for a background, enough to enable him to adore God in his most beautiful as well as in his most sublime works? Indeed, is not that all, and what more can be desired? A little garden to walk and immensity to reflect upon. At his feet something to cultivate and gather; above his head something to study and meditate upon; a few flowers on the earth and all the stars in the sky.

XIV

WHAT HE THOUGHT

A FINAL word.

As these details may, particularly in the times in which we live, and to use an expression now in fashion, give the Bishop of D—— a certain "pantheistic" physiognomy and give rise to the belief, whether to his blame or to his praise, that he had one of those personal philosophies peculiar to our age, which sometimes spring up in solitary minds and gather materials and grow until they replace religion, we insist upon it that no one who knew Mgr. Bienvenu would have felt justified in any such idea. What enlightened this man was the heart. His wisdom was formed from the light that came thence.

He had no systems; but many deeds. Abstruse speculations are full of headaches; nothing indicates that he would risk his mind in mysticisms. The apostle may be bold, but the bishop should be timid. He would probably have scrupled to sound too deeply certain problems, reserved in some sort for great and terrible minds. There is a sacred horror in the approaches to mysticism; sombre openings are yawning there, but something tells you, as you near the brink—enter not. Woe to him who does!

There are geniuses, who, in the fathomless depths of abstraction and pure speculation—situated, so to say, above all dogmas—present their ideas to God. Their prayer audaciously offers a discussion. Their worship is questioning. This is direct religion, full of anxiety and of responsibility for him who would scale its walls.

Human thought has no limit. At its risk and peril, it analyzes and dissects its own fascination. We could almost say that, by a sort of splendid reaction, it fascinates nature; the mysterious world which surrounds us returns what it receives; it is probable that the contemplators are contemplated. However that may be, there are men on the earth —if they are nothing more—who distinctly perceive the heights of the absolute in the horizon of their contemplation and who have the terrible vision of the infinite mountain. Mgr. Bienvenu was not one of those men; Mgr. Bienvenu

was not a genius. He would have dreaded those sublimities from which some very great men even, like Swedenborg and Pascal, have glided into insanity. Certainly, these tremendous reveries have their moral use; and by these arduous routes there is an approach to ideal perfection. But, for his part, he took the straight road—which is short—the gospel.

He did not attempt to make his robe assume the folds of Elijah's mantle; he cast no ray of the future upon the dark scroll of events; he sought not to condense into a flame the glimmer of things; he had nothing of the prophet and nothing of the magician. His humble soul loved; that was all.

That he raised his prayer to a superhuman aspiration is probable; but one can no more pray too much than love too much; and, if it was a heresy to pray beyond the written form, St. Theresa and St. Jerome were heretics.

He inclined toward the distressed and the repentant. The universe appeared to him like a vast disease; he perceived fever everywhere, he auscultated suffering everywhere, and, without essaying to solve the enigma, he endeavored to stanch the wound. The formidable spectacle of created things developed a tenderness in him; he was always busy in finding for himself, and inspiring others with the best way of sympathizing and solacing; the whole world was to this good and rare priest a permanent subject of sadness seeking to be consoled.

There are men who labor for the extraction of gold; he worked for the extraction of pity. The misery of the universe was his mine. Grief everywhere was only an occasion for good always. *Love one another;* he declared that to be complete; he desired nothing more, and it was his whole doctrine. One day this man, who counted himself "a philosopher," this senator before mentioned, said to the bishop: "See, now, what the world shows, each fighting against all others; the strongest man is the best man. Your '*love one another*' is a stupidity." "Well!" replied Mgr. Bienvenu, without discussion, "if it be a stupidity, the soul ought to shut itself up in it, like the pearl in the oyster." And he shut himself up in it, he lived in it, he was satisfied absolutely with it, laying aside the mysterious questions which attract and which dishearten, the unfath-

omable depths of abstraction, the precipices of metaphysics —all those profundities, to the apostle converging upon God, to the atheist upon annihilation; destiny, good and evil, the war of being against being, the conscience of man, the thought-like dreams of the animal, the transformation of death, the recapitulation of existences contained in the tomb, the incomprehensible engrafting of successive affections upon the enduring *me,* the essence, the substance, the nothing, and the something, the soul, nature, liberty, necessity; difficult problems, sinister depths, toward which are drawn the gigantic archangels of the human race; fearful abyss, that Lucretius, Manou, St. Paul, and Dante contemplate with that flaming eye which seems, looking steadfastly into the infinite, to enkindle the very stars.

M. Bienvenu was simply a man who accepted these mysterious questions without examining them, without agitating them, and without troubling his own mind with them; and who had in his soul a deep respect for the mystery which enveloped them.

BOOK SECOND—THE FALL

I

THE NIGHT OF A DAY'S TRAMP

AN hour before sunset, on the evening of a day in the beginning of October, 1815, a man traveling afoot entered the little town of D——. The few persons who at this time were at their windows or their doors regarded this traveler with a sort of distrust. It would have been hard to find a passer-by more wretched in appearance. He was a man of middle height, stout and hardy, in the strength of maturity; he might have been forty-six or forty-seven years old. A slouched leather cap half hid his face, bronzed by the sun and wind, and dripping with sweat. His shaggy breast was seen through the coarse yellow shirt which at the neck was fastened by a small silver anchor; he wore a cravat twisted like a rope; coarse blue trousers, worn and shabby, white on one knee and with holes in the other; an old, ragged, gray blouse patched on

one side with a piece of green cloth sewed with twine; upon his back was a well-filled knapsack, strongly buckled and quite new. In his hand he carried an enormous knotted stick; his stockingless feet were in hobnailed shoes; his hair was cropped and his beard long.

The sweat, the heat, his long walk, and the dust added an indescribable meanness to his tattered appearance.

His hair was shorn, but bristly, for it had begun to grow a little, and seemingly had not been cut for some time. Nobody knew him; he was evidently a traveler. Whence had he come? From the south—perhaps from the sea; for he was making his entrance into D—— by the same road by which, seven months before, the Emperor Napoleon went from Cannes to Paris. This man must have walked all day long, for he appeared very weary. Some women of the old city, which is at the lower part of the town, had seen him stop under the trees of the Boulevard Gassendi and drink at the fountain which is at the end of the promenade. He must have been very thirsty, for some children, who followed him, saw him stop not two hundred steps further on and drink again at the fountain in the market-place.

When he reached the corner of the Rue Poichevert he turned to the left and went toward the mayor's office. He went in, and a quarter of an hour afterward he came out.

The man raised his cap humbly and saluted a gendarme who was seated near the door, upon the stone bench which Gen. Drouot mounted on the 4th of March to read to the terrified inhabitants of D—— the proclamation of the *Golfe Juan.*

Without returning his salutation the gendarme looked at him attentively, watched him for some distance, and then went into the city hall.

There was then in D—— a good inn called La Croix-de-Colbas; its host was named Jacquin Labarre, a man held in some consideration in the town on account of his relationship with another Labarre, who kept an inn at Grenoble called Trois Dauphins and who has served in the guides. At the time of the landing of the Emperor there had been much noise in the country about this inn of the Trois Dauphins. It was said that Gen. Bertrand, disguised as a wagoner, had made frequent journeys thither in the month of January, and that he had distributed crosses of honor

to the soldiers and handfuls of napoleons to the country-folk. The truth is, that the Emperor, when he entered Grenoble, refused to take up his quarters at the prefecture, saying to the monsieur, after thanking him: "I am going to the house of a brave man with whom I am acquainted," and he went to the Trois Dauphins. This glory of Labarre of the Trois Dauphins was reflected twenty-five miles to Labarre of the Croix-de-Colbas. It was a common saying in the town: "He is the cousin of the Grenoble man!"

The traveler turned his steps toward this inn, which was the best in the place, and went at once into the kitchen, which opened out of the street. All the ranges were fuming and a great fire was burning briskly in the chimney-place. Mine host, who was at the same time head cook, was going from the fireplace to the saucepans, very busy superintending an excellent dinner for some wagoners who were laughing and talking noisily in the next room. Whoever has traveled knows that nobody lives better than wagoners. A fat marmot, flanked by white partridges and goose, was turning on a long spit before the fire; upon the ranges were cooking two large carps from Lake Lauzet and a trout from Lake Alloz.

The host, hearing the door open and a new-comer enter, said, without raising his eyes from his ranges: "What will monsieur have?"

"Something to eat and lodging."

"Nothing more easy," said mine host, but on turning his head and taking an observation of the traveler, he added, "for pay."

The man drew from his pocket a large leather purse and answered: "I have money."

"Then," said mine host, "I am at your service."

The man put his purse back into his pocket, took off his knapsack and put it down hard by the door, and, holding his stick in his hand, sat down on a low stool by the fire. D—— being in the mountains the evenings of October are cold there.

However, as the host passed backward and forward, he kept a careful eye on the traveler.

"Is dinner almost ready?" said the man.

"Directly," said mine host.

While the new-comer was warming himself with his back

turned, the worthy innkeeper, Jacquin Labarre, took a pencil from his pocket and then tore off the corner of an old paper which he pulled from a little table near the window. On the margin he wrote a line or two, folded it, and handed the scrap of paper to a child, who appeared to serve him as lackey and scullion at the same time. The innkeeper whispered a word to the boy and he ran off in the direction of the mayor's office.

The traveler saw nothing of this.

He asked a second time: "Is dinner ready?"

"Yes; in a few moments," said the host.

The boy came back with the paper. The host unfolded it hurriedly, as one who is expecting an answer. He seemed to read with attention, then, throwing his head on one side, thought for a moment. Then he took a step toward the traveler, who seemed drowned in troublous thought.

"Monsieur," said he, "I can not receive you."

The traveler half rose from his seat.

"Why? Are you afraid I shall not pay you, or do you want me to pay in advance? I have money, I tell you."

"It is not that."

"What then?"

"You have money—"

"Yes," said the man.

"And I," said the host, "have no room."

"Well, put me in the stable," quietly replied the man.

"I can not."

"Why?"

"Because the horses take all the room."

"Well," responded the man, "a corner in the garret; a truss of straw—we will see about that after dinner."

"I can not give you any dinner."

This declaration, made in a measured but firm tone, appeared serious to the traveler. He got up.

"Ah, bah! but I am dying with hunger. I have walked since sunrise; I have traveled twelve leagues. I will pay, and I want something to eat."

"I have nothing," said the host.

The man burst into a laugh and turned toward the fireplace and the ranges.

"Nothing! and all that?"

"All that is engaged."

"By whom?"

"By those persons—the wagoners."

"How many are there of them?"

"Twelve."

"There is enough there for twenty."

"They have engaged and paid for it all in advance."

The man sat down again and said, without raising his voice: "I am at an inn. I am hungry, and I shall stay."

The host bent down to his ear and said, in a voice which made him tremble: "Go away!"

At these words the traveler, who was bent over, poking some embers in the fire with the iron-shod end of his stick, turned suddenly around and opened his mouth, as if to reply, when the host, looking steadily at him, added, in the same low tone: "Stop, no more of that. Shall I tell you your name? your name is Jean Valjean; now, shall I tell you *who* you are? When I saw you enter I suspected something. I sent to the mayor's office, and here is the reply. Can you read? So saying, he held toward him the open paper, which had just come from the mayor. The man cast a look upon it; the innkeeper, after a short silence, said: "It is my custom to be polite to all. Go!"

The man bowed his head, picked up his knapsack, and went out.

He took the principal street; he walked at random, slinking near the houses like a sad and humiliated man; he did not once turn around. If he had turned he would have seen the innkeeper of the Croix-de-Colbas standing in his doorway, with all his guests and the passers-by gathered about him, speaking excitedly and pointing him out; and from the looks of fear and distrust which were exchanged he would have guessed that before long his arrival would be the talk of the whole town.

He saw nothing of all this; people overwhelmed with trouble do not look behind; they know only too well that misfortune follows them.

He walked along in this way some time, going by chance down streets unknown to him, and forgetting fatigue, as is the case in sorrow. Suddenly he felt a pang of hunger; night was at hand, and he looked around to see if he could not discover a lodging.

The good inn was closed against him; he sought some humble tavern, some poor cellar.

Just then a light shone at the end of the street; he saw a pine branch hanging by an iron bracket against the white sky of the twilight. He went thither.

It was a tavern in the Rue Chaffaut.

The traveler stopped a moment and looked in at the little window upon the low hall of the tavern, lighted by a small lamp upon a table and a great fire in the chimney-place. Some men were drinking and the host was warming himself; an iron pot hung over the fire seething in the blaze.

Two doors led into this tavern, which is also a sort of eating-house—one from the street, the other from a small court full of rubbish.

The traveler did not dare to enter by the street door; he slipped into the court, stopped again, then timidly raised the latch and pushed open the door.

"Who is it?" said the host.

"One who wants supper and a bed."

"All right; here you can sup and sleep."

He went in; all the men who were drinking turned toward him; the lamp shining on one side of his face, the firelight on the other, they examined him for some time as he was taking off his knapsack.

The host said to him: "There is the fire; the supper is cooking in the pot; come and warm yourself, comrade."

He seated himself near the fireplace and stretched his feet out toward the fire, half dead with fatigue; an inviting odor came from the pot. All that could be seen of his face under his slouched cap assumed a vague appearance of comfort, which tempered the sorrowful aspect given him by long-continued suffering.

His profile was strong, energetic, and sad; a physiognomy strangely marked; at first it appeared humble, but it soon became severe. His eyes shone beneath his eyebrows like a fire beneath a thicket.

However, one of the men at the table was a fisherman who had put up his horse at the stable of Labarre's inn before entering the tavern of the Rue de Chaffaut. It so happened that he had met that same morning this suspicious-looking stranger traveling between Bras d'Asse and —I forget the place; I think it is Escoublon. Now, on

meeting him, the man who seemed already very much fatigued, had asked him to take him on behind, to which the fisherman responded only by doubling his pace. The fisherman half an hour before had been one of the throng about Jacquin Labarre, and had himself related the unpleasant meeting with him to the people of the Croix-de-Colbas. He beckoned to the tavern-keeper to come to him, which he did. They exchanged a few words in a low voice; the traveler had again relapsed into thought.

The tavern-keeper returned to the fire, and, laying his hand roughly on his shoulder, said, harshly: "You are going to clear out from here!"

The stranger turned round and said, mildly: "Ah! Do you know?"

"Yes."

"They sent me away from the other inn."

"And we turn you out of this."

"Where would you have me go?"

"Somewhere else."

The man took up his stick and knapsack and went off. As he went out some children who had followed him from the Croix-de-Colbas, and seemed to be waiting for him, threw stones at him. He turned angrily and threatened them with his stick, and they scattered like a flock of birds.

He passed the prison; an iron chain hung from the door attached to a bell. He rang.

The grating opened.

"M. Turnkey," said he, taking off his cap respectfully, "will you open and let me stay here to-night?"

A voice answered: "A prison is not a tavern; get yourself arrested and we will open."

The grating closed.

He went into a small street where there are many gardens; some of them are inclosed only by hedges, which enliven the street. Among them he saw a pretty little one-story house, where there was a light in the window. He looked in as he had done at the tavern. It was a large whitewashed room, with a bed draped with calico, and a cradle in the corner, some wooden chairs, and a double-barreled gun hung against the wall. A table was set in the centre of the room; a brass lamp lighted the coarse white

tablecloth; a tin mug full of wine shone like silver, and the brown soup-dish was smoking. At this table sat a man about forty years old, with a joyous, open countenance, who was trotting a little child upon his knee. Near by him a young woman was suckling another child; the father was laughing, the child was laughing, and the mother was smiling.

The traveler remained a moment contemplating this sweet and touching scene. What were his thoughts? He only could have told. Probably he thought that this happy home would be hospitable, and that where he beheld so much happiness he might perhaps find a little pity.

He rapped faintly on the window.

No one heard him.

He rapped a second time.

He heard the woman say: "Husband, I think I hear some one rap."

"No," replied the husband.

He rapped a third time. The husband got up, took the lamp, and opened the door.

He was a tall man, half peasant, half mechanic. He wore a large leather apron that reached to his left shoulder, and formed a pocket containing a hammer, a red handkerchief, a powder-horn, and all sorts of things which the girdle held up. He turned his head; his shirt, wide and open, showed his bull-like throat, white and naked; he had thick brows, enormous black whiskers, and prominent eyes; the lower part of the face was covered, and had withal that air of being at home which is quite indescribable.

"Monsieur," said the traveler, "I beg your pardon; for pay can you give me a plate of soup and a corner of the shed in your garden to sleep in? Tell me; can you, for pay?"

"Who are you?" demanded the master of the house.

The man replied: "I have come from Puy-Moisson; I have walked all day; I have come twelve leagues. Can you, if I pay?"

"I wouldn't refuse to lodge any proper person who would pay," said the peasant; "but why do you not go to the inn?"

"There is no room."

"Ah! That is not possible. It is neither a fair nor a market-day. Have you been to Labarre's house?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

The traveler replied hesitatingly, "I don't know; he didn't take me."

"Have you been in that place in the Rue Chaffaut?"

The embarrassment of the stranger increased; he stammered: "They didn't take me either."

The peasant's face assumed an expression of distrust; he looked over the new-comer from head to foot, and suddenly exclaimed, with a sort of shudder: "Are you the man?"

He looked again at the stranger, stepped back, put the lamp on the table, and took down his gun.

His wife, on hearing the words, "Are you the man," started up, and, clasping her two children, precipitately took refuge behind her husband; she looked at the stranger with affright, her neck bare, her eyes dilated, murmuring in a low tone: "Tso maraude!" *

All this happened in less time than it takes to read it; after examining the man for a moment, as one would a viper, the man advanced to the door and said: "Get out!"

"For pity's sake, a glass of water," said the man.

"A gunshot," said the peasant, and then he closed the door violently, and the man heard two heavy bolts drawn. A moment afterward the window-shutters were shut and noisily barred.

Night came on apace; the cold Alpine winds were blowing; by the light of the expiring day the stranger perceived in one of the gardens which fronted the street a kind of hut which seemed to be made of turf; he boldly cleared a wooden fence and found himself in the garden. He neared the hut; its door was a narrow, low entrance; it resembled in its construction the shanties which the road-laborers put up for their temporary accommodation. He, doubtless, thought that it was, in fact, the lodging of a road-laborer. He was suffering both from cold and hunger. He had resigned himself to the latter; but there, at least, was a shelter from the cold. These huts are not usually occupied at night. He got down and crawled into the hut. It was warm there, and he found a good bed of straw.

* Patois of the French Alps, "Chat de Maraude."

He rested a moment upon this bed, motionless from fatigue; then, as his knapsack on his back troubled him, and it would make a good pillow, he began to unbuckle the straps. Just then he heard a ferocious growling, and looking up saw the head of an enormous bull-dog at the opening of the hut.

It was a dog-kennel!

He was himself vigorous and formidable; seizing his stick he made a shield of his knapsack, and got out of the hut as best he could, but not without enlarging the rents of his already tattered garments.

He made his way also out of the garden, but backward; being obliged out of respect to the dog to have recourse to that kind of manœuvre with his stick, which adepts in this sort of fencing call *la rose couverte.*

When he had, not without difficulty, got over the fence, he again found himself alone in the street, without lodging, roof, or shelter, driven even from the straw-bed of that wretched dog-kennel. He threw himself rather than seated himself on a stone, and it appeared that some one who was passing heard him exclaim: "I am not even a dog?"

Then he rose and began to tramp again, taking his way out of the town, hoping to find some tree or haystack beneath which he could shelter himself. He walked on for some time, his head bowed down. When he thought he was far away from all human habitation he raised his eyes and looked about him inquiringly. He was in a field; before him was a low hillock covered with stubble which after the harvest looks like a shaved head. The sky was very dark; it was not simply the darkness of the night, but there were very low clouds which seemed to rest upon the hills and covered the whole heavens. A little of the twilight, however, lingered in the zenith; and as the moon was about to rise these clouds formed in mid-heaven a vault of whitish light from which a glimmer fell upon the earth.

The earth was then lighter than the sky, which produces a peculiarly sinister effect, and the hill, poor and mean in contour, loomed out dim and pale upon the gloomy horizon; the whole prospect was hideous, mean, lugubrious and insignificant. There was nothing in the field nor upon the hill but one ugly tree, a few steps from the traveler, which seemed to be twisting and contorting itself.

This man was evidently far from possessing those delicate perceptions of intelligence and feeling which produce a sensitiveness to the mysterious aspects of nature; still, there was in the sky, in this hillock, plain and tree, something so profoundly desolate that after a moment of motionless contemplation he turned back hastily to the road. There are moments when nature appears hostile.

He retraced his steps; the gates of D—— were closed. D——, which sustained sieges in the religious wars, was still surrounded, in 1815, by old walls flanked by square towers, since demolished. He passed through a breach and entered the town.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening; as he did not know the streets he walked at hazard.

So he came to the prefecture, then to the seminary; on passing by the cathedral square, he shook his fist at the church.

At the corner of this square stands a printing-office; there were first printed the proclamations of the Emperor and the imperial guard to the army, brought from the Island of Elba and dictated by Napoleon himself.

Exhausted with fatigue, and hoping for nothing better, he lay down on a stone bench in front of this printing-office.

Just then an old woman came out of church. She saw the man lying there in the dark, and said: "What are you doing there, my friend?"

He replied, harshly, and with anger in his tone: "You see, my good woman, I am going to sleep."

The good woman, who really merited the name, was Mme. la Marquise de R——.

"Upon the bench?" said she.

"For nineteen years I have had a wooden mattress," said the man; "to-night I have a stone one."

"You have been a soldier?"

"Yes, my good woman, a soldier."

"Why don't you go to the inn?"

"Because I have no money."

"Alas!" said Mme. de R——, "I have only four sous in my purse."

"Give them, then." The man took the four sous and Mme. de R—— continued:

"You can not find lodging for so little in an inn. But have you tried? You can not pass the night so. You must be cold and hungry. They should give you lodging for charity."

"I have knocked at every door."

"Well, what then?"

"Everybody has driven me away."

The good woman touched the man's arm and pointed out to him, on the other side of the square, a little low house beside the bishop's palace.

"You have knocked at every door?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Have you knocked at that one there?"

"No."

"Knock there."

II

PRUDENCE COMMENDED TO WISDOM

THAT evening, after his walk in the town, the Bishop of D—— remained quite late in his room. He was busy with his great work on "Duty," which unfortunately is left incomplete. He carefully dissected all that the fathers and doctors have said on this serious topic. His book was divided into two parts: First, the duties of all; second, the duties of each, according to his position in life. The duties of all are the principal duties; there are four of them, as set forth by St. Matthew: duty toward God (Matt. vi), duty toward ourselves (Matt. v, 29, 30); duty toward our neighbor (Matt. vii, 12); and duty toward animals (Matt. vi, 20, 25). As to other duties, the bishop found them defined and prescribed elsewhere; those of sovereigns and subjects, in the Epistle to the Romans; those of magistrates, wives, mothers, and young men, by St. Peter; those of husbands, fathers, children, and servants, in the Epistle to the Ephesians; those of the faithful, in the Epistle to the Hebrews; and those of virgins, in the Epistle to the Corinthians. He collated with much labor these injunctions into a harmonious whole, which he wished to offer to souls.

At eight o'clock he was still at work, writing with some inconvenience on little slips of paper, with a large book

open on his knees, when Mme. Magloire, as usual, came in to take the silver from the panel near the bed. A moment after, the bishop, knowing that the table was laid, and that his sister was perhaps waiting, closed his book and went into the dining-room.

This dining-room was an oblong apartment, with a fireplace, and with a door upon the street, as we have said, and a window opening into the garden.

Mme. Magloire had just finished placing the plates.

While she was arranging the table she was talking with Mdlle. Baptistine.

The lamp was on the table, which was near the fireplace, where a good fire was burning.

One can readily fancy these two women, both past their sixtieth year. Mme. Magloire, small, fat, and quick in her movements; Mdlle. Baptistine, sweet, thin, fragile, a little taller than her brother, wore a silk puce color dress, in the style 1806, which she had bought at that time in Pairs, and which still lasted her. To borrow a common mode of expression, which has the merit of saying in a single word what a page would hardly express, Mme. Magloire had the air of a peasant and Mdlle. Baptistine that of a lady. Mme. Magloire wore a white funnel-shaped cap; a gold *jeannette* at her neck, the only bit of feminine jewelry in the house, a snowy fichu just peering out above a black frieze dress with wide short sleeves, a green and red checked calico apron tied at the waist with a green ribbon, with a stomacher of the same pinned up in front; on her feet, she wore coarse shoes and yellow stockings like the women of Marseilles. Mdlle. Baptistine's dress was cut after the fashion of 1806, short waist, narrow skirt, sleeves with epaulets, and with flaps and buttons. Her gray hair was hid under a frizzed front called *à l'enfant*. Mme. Magloire had an intelligent, clever, and lively air; the two corners of her mouth unequally raised, and the upper lip projecting beyond the under one, gave something morose and imperious to her expression. So long as monseigneur was silent she talked to him without reserve and with a mingled respect and freedom; but from the time that he opened his mouth, as we have seen, she implicitly obeyed like mademoiselle. Mdlle. Baptistine, however, did not speak. She confined herself to obeying and endeavoring

to please. Even when she was young she was not pretty; she had large and very prominent blue eyes and a long pinched nose, but her whole face and person, as we said in the outset, breathed an ineffable goodness. She had been foreordained to meekness, but faith, charity, hope, these three virtues which gently warm the heart, had gradually sublimated this meekness into sanctity. Nature had made her a lamb; religion had made her an angel. Poor, sainted woman! gentle, but lost souvenir.

Mdlle. Baptistine has so often related what occurred at the bishop's house that evening that many persons are still living who can recall the minutest details.

Just as the bishop entered Mme. Magloire was speaking with some warmth. She was talking to mademoiselle upon a familiar subject, and one to which the bishop was quite accustomed. It was a discussion on the means of fastening the front door.

It seems that while Mme. Magloire was out making provision for supper she had heard the news in sundry places. There was talk that an ill-favored runaway, a suspicious vagabond, had arrived and was lurking somewhere in the town, and that some unpleasant adventures might befall those who should come home late that night; besides, that the police were very bad, as the prefect and the mayor did not like one another, and were hoping to injure each other by untoward events; that it was the part of wise people to be their own police and to protect their own persons; and that every one ought to be careful to shut up, bolt, and bar his house properly and *secure his door thoroughly*.

Mme. Magloire dwelt upon these last words; but the bishop, having come from a cold room, seated himself before the fire and began to warm himself, and then, he was thinking of something else. He did not hear a word of what was let fall by Mme. Magloire, and she repeated it. Then Mdlle. Baptistine, endeavoring to satisfy Mme. Magloire without displeasing her brother, ventured to say, timidly: "Brother, do you hear what Mme. Magloire says?"

"I heard something of it indistinctly," said the bishop. Then, turning his chair half round, putting his hands on his knees, and raising toward the old servant his cordial and good-humored face, which the firelight shone upon,

he said: "Well, well, what is the matter! Are we in any great danger?"

Then Mme. Magloire began her story again, unconsciously exaggerating it a little. It appeared that a barefooted gypsy man, a sort of dangerous beggar, was in the town. He had gone for lodging to Jacquin Labarre, who had refused to receive him; he had been seen to enter the town by the Boulevard Gassendi, and to roam through the streets at dusk. A man with a knapsack and a rope and a terrible looking face.

"Indeed!" said the bishop.

This readiness to question her encouraged Mme. Magloire; it seemed to indicate that the bishop was really well-nigh alarmed. She continued, triumphantly: "Yes, monseigneur; it is true. There will something happen to-night in the town; everybody says so. The police is so badly organized [a convenient repetition]. To live in this mountainous country, and not even to have street lamps! If one goes out, it is dark as a pocket. And I say, monseigneur, and mademoiselle says also—"

"Me?" interrupted the sister; "I say nothing. Whatever my brother does is well done."

Mme. Magloire went on as if she had not heard this protestation.

"We say that this house is not safe at all; and, if monseigneur will permit me, I will go on and tell Paulin Musebois, the locksmith, to come and put the old bolts in the door again; they are there, and it will take but a minute. I say we must have bolts, were it only for to-night; for I say that a door which opens by a latch on the outside to the first comer, nothing could be more horrible; and then monseigneur has the habit of always saying: 'Come in,' even at midnight. But, my goodness, there is no need to even ask leave—"

At this moment there was a violent knock on the door.

"Come in!" said the bishop.

III

THE HEROISM OF PASSIVE OBEDIENCE

THE door opened.

It opened quickly, quite wide, as if pushed by some one boldly and with energy.

A man entered.

That man we know already; it was the traveler we have seen wandering about in search of a lodging.

He came in, took one step, and paused, leaving the door open behind him. He had his knapsack on his back, his stick in his hand, and a rough, hard, tired, and fierce look in his eyes, as seen by the firelight. He was hideous. It was an apparition of ill-omen.

Mme. Magloire had not even the strength to scream. She stood trembling with her mouth open.

Mdlle. Baptistine turned, saw the man enter, and started out half alarmed; then, slowly turning back again toward the fire, she looked at her brother, and her face resumed its usual calmness and serenity.

The bishop looked upon the man with a tranquil eye.

As he was opening his mouth to speak, doubtless to ask the stranger what he wanted, the man, leaning with both hands on his club, glanced from one to another in turn, and, without waiting for the bishop to speak, said, in a loud voice: "See here! My name is Jean Valjean. I am a convict; I have been nineteen years in the galleys. Four days ago I was set free, and started for Pontarlier, which is my destination; during these four days I have walked from Toulon. To-day I have walked twelve leagues. When I reached this place this evening I went to an inn, and they sent me away on account of my yellow passport, which I had shown at the mayor's office, as was necessary. I went to another inn; they said: 'Get out!' It was the same with one as with another; nobody would have me. I went to the prison and the turnkey would not let me in. I crept into a dog-kennel, the dog bit me, and drove me away as if he had been a man; you would have said that he knew who I was. I went into the fields to sleep beneath the stars; there were no stars. I thought it would rain, and there

was no good God to stop the drops, so I came back to the town to get the shelter of some doorway. There in the square I lay down upon a stone; a good woman showed me your house, and said: 'Knock there!' I have knocked. What is this place? Are you an inn? I have money; my savings, 109 francs and 15 sous, which I have earned in the galleys by my work for nineteen years. I will pay. What do I care? I have money. I am very tired—twelve leagues on foot—and I am so hungry. Can I stay?"

"Mme. Magloire," said the bishop, "put on another plate."

The man took three steps and came near the lamp which stood on the table. "Stop," he exclaimed; as if he had not been understood; "not that, did you understand me? I am a galley slave—a convict—I am just from the galleys." He drew from his pocket a large sheet of yellow paper, which he unfolded. "There is my passport, yellow, as you see. That is enough to have me kicked out wherever I go. Will you read it? I know how to read, I do. I learned in the galleys. There is a school there for those who care for it. See, here is what they have put in my passport: 'Jean Valjean, a liberated convict, native of ——,' you don't care for that, 'has been nineteen years in the galleys; five years for burglary; fourteen years for having attempted four times to escape. This man is very dangerous.' There you have it! Everybody has thrust me out; will you receive me? Is this an inn? Can you give me something to eat and a place to sleep? Have you a stable?"

"Mme. Magloire," said the bishop, "put some sheets on the bed in the alcove."

We have already described the kind of obedience yielded by these two women.

Mme. Magloire went out to fulfil her orders.

The bishop turned to the man: "Monsieur, sit down and warm yourself; we are going to take supper presently, and your bed will be made ready while you sup."

At last the man quite understood; his face, the expression of which till then had been gloomy and hard, now expressed stupefaction, doubt and joy, and became absolutely wonderful. He began to stutter like a madman.

"True? What? You will keep me? you won't drive me away—a convict? You call me monsieur and don't

say, 'Get out, dog!' as everybody else does. I thought that you would send me away, so I told first off who I am. Oh! the fine woman who sent me here; I shall have a supper! a bed like other people, with mattress and sheets —a bed! It is nineteen years that I have not slept on a bed. You are really willing that I should stay? You are good people! Besides, I have money; I will pay well. I beg your pardon, M. Innkeeper, what is your name? I will pay all you say. You are a fine man. You are an innkeeper, ain't you?"

"I am a priest who lives here," said the bishop.

"A priest," said the man. "Oh, noble priest! Then you do not ask any money? You are the curé, ain't you —the curé of this big church? Yes, that's it. How stupid I am, I didn't notice your cap."

While speaking he had deposited his knapsack and stick in the corner, replaced his passport in his pocket and sat down. Mdlle. Baptistine looked at him pleasantly. He continued: "You are humane, M. l'Curé; you don't despise me. A good priest is a good thing. Then you don't want me to pay you?"

"No," said the bishop, "keep your money. How much have you? You said 109 francs, I think."

"And 15 sous," added the man.

"One hundred and nine francs and fifteen sous. And how long did it take you to earn that?"

"Nineteen years."

"Nineteen years!"

The bishop sighed deeply.

The man continued: "I have all my money yet. In four days I have spent only 25 sous which I earned by unloading wagons at Grasse. As you are an abbé I must tell you we have an almoner in the galleys. And then one day I saw a bishop; monseigneur, they called him. It was the Bishop of Majore from Marseilles. He is the curé who is over the curés. You see—beg pardon, how I bungle saying it—but for me it is so far off; you know what we are. He said mass in the centre of the place on an altar; he had a pointed gold thing on his head that shone in the sun; it was noon. We were drawn up in line on three sides with cannons, and matches lighted before us. We could not see him well. He spoke to us, but he was not near

enough, we did not understand him. That is what a bishop is."

While he was talking the bishop shut the door, which he had left wide open.

Mme. Magloire brought in a plate and set it on the table.

"Mme. Magloire," said the bishop, "put this plate as near the fire as you can." Then turning toward his guest he added: "The night wind is raw in the Alps; you must be cold, monsieur."

Every time he said the word monsieur with his gently solemn and heartily hospitable voice the man's countenance lighted up. Monsieur to a convict is a glass of water to a man dying of thirst at sea. Ignominy thirsts for respect.

"The lamp," said the bishop, "gives a very poor light."

Mme. Magloire understood him, and, going to his bedchamber, took from the mantel the two silver candlesticks, lighted the candles and placed them on the table.

"M. l'Curé," said the man, "you are good; you don't despise me. You take me into your house; you light your candles for me, and I haven't hid from you where I come from, and how miserable I am."

The bishop, who was sitting near him, touched his hand gently and said: "You need not tell me who you are. This is not my house; it is the house of Christ. It does not ask any comer whether he has a name, but whether he has an affliction. You are suffering; you are hungry and thirsty; be welcome. And do not thank me; do not tell me that I take you into my house. This is the home of no man except him who needs an asylum. I tell you who are a traveler, that you are more at home here than I; whatever is here is yours. What need have I to know your name? Besides, before you told me, I knew it."

The man opened his eyes in astonishment.

"Really? You knew my name?"

"Yes," answered the bishop, "your name is my brother."

"Stop, stop, M. l'Curé," exclaimed the man, "I was famished when I came in, but you are so kind that now I don't know what I am; that is all gone."

The bishop looked at him again and said: "You have seen much suffering?"

"Oh, the red blouse, the ball and chain, the plank to sleep on, the heat, the cold, the galley's screw, the lash, the

double chain for nothing, the dungeon for a word—even when sick in bed, the chain. The dogs, the dogs are happier! nineteen years! and I am forty-six, and now a yellow passport. That is all."

"Yes," answered the bishop, "you have left a place of suffering. But listen, there will be more joy in heaven over the tears of a repentant sinner than over the white robes of one hundred good men. If you are leaving that sorrowful place with hate and anger against men, you are worthy of compassion; if you leave it with good-will, gentleness, and peace, you are better than any of us."

Meantime Mme. Magloire had served up supper; it consisted of soup made of water, oil, bread, and salt, a little pork, a scrap of mutton, a few figs, a green cheese, and a large loaf of rye bread. She had, without asking, added to the usual dinner of the bishop a bottle of fine old Mauves wine.

The bishop's countenance was lighted up with this expression of pleasure, peculiar to hospitable natures. "To supper!" he said, briskly, as was his habit when he had a guest. He seated the man at his right. Mdlle. Baptistine, perfectly quiet and natural, took her place at his left.

The bishop said the blessing and then served the soup himself according to his usual custom. The man fell to eating greedily.

Suddenly the bishop said: "It seems to me something is lacking on the table."

The fact was that Mme. Magloire had set out only the three plates which were necessary. Now it was the custom of the house when the bishop had any one to supper to set all six of the silver plates on the table, an innocent display. This graceful appearance of luxury was a sort of childlikeness which was full of charm in this gentle but austere household, which elevated poverty to dignity.

Mme. Magloire understood the remark; without a word she went out, and a moment afterward the three plates for which the bishop had asked were shining on the cloth, symmetrically arranged before each of the three diners.

IV

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE DAIRIES OF PONTARLIER

NOW, in order to give an idea of what passed at this table, we can not do better than to transcribe here a passage in a letter from Mdlle. Baptistine to Mme. de Boischevron, in which the conversation between the convict and the bishop is related with charming minuteness:

"This man paid no attention to any one. He ate with the voracity of a starving man. After supper, however, he said:

"M. l'Curé, all this is too good for me, but I must say that the wagoners, who wouldn't have me eat with them, live better than you.'

"Between us, the remark shocked me a little. My brother answered:

" 'They are more fatigued than I am.'

" 'No,' responded this man; 'they have more money. You are poor, I can see. Perhaps you are not a curé even? Are you only a curé? Ah! if God is just, you will deserve to be a curé."

" 'God is more than just,' said my brother.

"A moment after he added:

" 'M. Jean Valjean, you are going to Pontarlier?'

" 'A compulsory journey.'

"I am pretty sure that is the expression the man used. Then he continued:

" 'I must be on the road to-morrow morning by daybreak. It is a hard journey. If the nights are cold the days are warm.'

" 'You are going,' said my brother, 'to a fine country. During the Revolution, when my family was ruined, I took refuge at first in Franche-Comte, and supported myself there for some time by the labor of my hands. There I found plenty of work, and had only to make my choice. There are paper-mills, tanneries, distilleries, oil factories, large clock-making establishments, steel manufactories, copper foundries, at least twenty iron foundries, four of

which, at Lods, Châtillion, Audincourt, and Beure, are very large.'

"I think I am not mistaken, and that these are the names that my brother mentioned. Then he broke off and addressed me:

" 'Dear sister, have we not relatives in that part of the country?'

"I answered:

" 'We had; among others, M. Lucenet, who was captain of the gates at Pontarlier under the old regime.'

" 'Yes,' replied my brother, 'but in '93 no one had relatives; every one depended upon his hands. I labored. They have in the region of Pontarlier where you are going, M. Valjean, a business which is quite patriarchal and very charming, sister. It is their dairies, which they call *fruitières.*'

"Then my brother, while helping this man at table, explained to him in detail what these *fruitières* were—that they were divided into two kinds; the *great barn,* belonging to the rich, and where there are forty or fifty cows, which produce from 7,000 to 8,000 cheeses during the summer; and the associated *fruitières,* which belong to the poor; these comprise the peasants inhabiting the mountains, who put their cows into a common herd and divide the proceeds. They hire a cheese-maker, whom they call a *grurin;* the *grurin* receives the milk of the associates three times a day and notes the quantities in duplicate. Toward the end of April the dairy work commences, and about the middle of June the cheese-makers drive their cows into the mountains.

"The man became animated even while he was eating. My brother gave him some good Mauves wine, which he does not drink himself, because he says it is too dear. My brother gave him all these details with that easy gayety which you know is peculiar to him, intermingling his words with compliments for me. He dwelt much upon the good condition of a *grurin,* as if he wished this man should understand without advising him directly and abruptly that it would be an asylum for him. One thing struck me. This man was what I have told you. Well, my brother during the supper and during the entire evening, with the exception of a few words about Jesus when

he entered, did not say a word which could recall to this man who he himself was, nor indicate to him who my brother was. It was apparently a fine occasion to get in a little sermon and set up the bishop above the convict in order to make an impression upon his mind. It would, perhaps, have appeared to some to be a duty, having this unhappy man in hand, to feed the mind at the same time with the body, and to administer reproof, seasoned with morality and advice, or at least a little pity, accompanied by an exhortation to conduct himself better in future. My brother asked him neither his country nor his history; for his crime lay in his history, and my brother seemed to avoid everything which could recall it to him. At one time as my brother was speaking of the mountaineers of Pontarlier who have a pleasant labor near heaven and who, he added, are happy because they are innocent, he stopped short, fearing there might have been in this word which had escaped him something which could wound the feelings of this man. Upon reflection, I think I understand what was passing in my brother's mind. He thought, doubtless, that this man, who called himself Jean Valjean, had his wretchedness too constantly before his mind; that it was best not to distress him by referring to it, and to make him think, if it were only for a moment, that he was a common person like any one else by treating him thus in the ordinary way. Is not this really understanding charity? Is there not, dear madame, something truly evangelical in this delicacy which abstains from sermonizing, moralizing, and making allusions, and is not the wisest sympathy when a man has a suffering point not to touch upon it at all? It seems to me that this was my brother's inmost thought. At any rate, all I can say is, if he had all these ideas he did not show them even to me; he was, from beginning to end, the same as on other evenings, and he took supper with this Jean Valjean with the same air and manner that he would have supped with M. Gédéon, the provost, or with the curé of the parish.

"Toward the end, as we were at dessert, some one pushed the door open. It was Mother Gerbaud with her child in her arms. My brother kissed the child and borrowed 15 sous that I had with me to give to Mother Gerbaud. The man, during this time, paid but little attention to what

passed. He did not speak, and appeared to be very tired. The poor old lady left and my brother said grace, after which he turned toward this man and said: 'You must be in great need of sleep.' Mme. Magloire quickly removed the cloth. I understood that we ought to retire in order that this traveler might sleep, and we both went to our rooms. However, in a few moments afterward, I sent to Mme. Magloire to put on the bed of this man a roebuck skin from the Black Forest, which is in my chamber. The nights are quite cold and this skin retains the warmth. It is a pity that it is quite old and all the hair is gone. My brother bought it when he was in Germany, at Totlingen, near the sources of the Danube, as also the little ivory-handled knife which I use at table. Mme. Magloire came back immediately, we said our prayers in the parlor which we use as a drying-room, and then we retired to our chambers without saying a word."

V

TRANQUILLITY

AFTER having said good-night to his sister, Mgr. Bienvenu took one of the silver candlesticks from the table, handed the other to his guest, and said to him: "Monsieur, I will show you to your room."

The man followed him.

As may have been understood from what has been said before, the house was so arranged that one could reach the alcove in the oratory only by passing through the bishop's sleeping-chamber. Just as they were passing through this room Mme. Magloire was putting up the silver in the cupboard at the head of the bed. It was the last thing she did every night before going to bed.

The bishop left his guest in the alcove before a clean, white bed. The man set down the candlestick upon a small table.

"Come," said the bishop, "a good night's rest to you; to-morrow morning, before you go, you shall have a cup of warm milk from our cows."

"Thank you, M. l'Abbé," said the man.

Scarcely had he pronounced these words of peace when suddenly he made a singular motion which would have

chilled the two good women of the house with horror had they witnessed it. Even now it is hard for us to understand what impulse he obeyed at that moment. Did he intend to give a warning or to throw out a meance? Or was he simply obeying a sort of instinctive impulse, obscure even to himself? He turned abruptly toward the old man, crossed his arms, and, casting a wild look upon his host, exclaimed in a harsh voice: "Ah, now, indeed! You lodge me in your house as near to you as that!"

He checked himself and added with a laugh, in which there was something horrible: "Have you reflected upon it? Who tells you that I am not a murderer?"

The bishop responded: "God will take care of that."

Then, with gravity, moving his lips like one praying or talking to himself, he raised two fingers of his right hand and blessed the man, who, however, did not bow; and, without turning his head or looking behind him, went into his chamber.

When the alcove was occupied a heavy serge curtain was drawn in the oratory, concealing the altar. Before this curtain the bishop knelt as he passed out and offered a short prayer.

A moment afterward he was walking in the garden, surrendering mind and soul to a dreamy contemplation of these grand and mysterious works of God which night makes visible to the eye.

As to the man, he was so completely exhausted that he did not even avail himself of the clean white sheets; he blew out the candle with his nostril, after the manner of convicts, and fell on the bed, dressed as he was, into a sound sleep.

Midnight struck as the bishop came back to his chamber.

A few moments afterward all in the little house slept.

VI

JEAN VALJEAN

TOWARD the middle of the night Jean Valjean awoke. Jean Valjean was born of a poor peasant family of Brie. In his childhood he had not been taught to read; when he was grown up he chose the occupation of a pruner

at Faverolles. His mother's name was Jeanne Mathieu; his father's Jean Valjean or Vlajean, probably a nickname, a contraction of *Voilà Jean.*

Jean Valjean was of a thoughtful disposition, but not sad, which is characteristic of affectionate natures. Upon the whole, however, there was something torpid and insignificant, in the appearance, at least, of Jean Valjean. He had lost his parents when very young. His mother died of malpractice in a milk-fever; his father, a pruner before him, was killed by a fall from a tree. Jean Valjean now had but one relative left, his sister, a widow with seven children, girls and boys. This sister had brought up Jean Valjean, and, as long as her husband lived, she had taken care of her young brother. Her husband died, leaving the eldest of these children eight, the youngest one year old. Jean Valjean had just reached his twenty-fifth year; he took the father's place, and, in his turn, supported the sister who reared him. This he did naturally, as a duty, and even with a sort of moroseness on his part. His youth was spent in rough and ill-recompensed labor; he never was known to have a sweetheart; he had not time to be in love.

At night he came in weary and ate his soup without saying a word. While he was eating, his sister, Mère Jeanne, frequently took from his porringer the best of his meal; a bit of meat, a slice of pork, the heart of the cabbage, to give to one of her children. He went on eating, his head bent down nearly into the soup, his long hair falling over his dish, hiding his eyes; he did not seem to notice anything that was done. At Faverolles, not far from the house of the Valjeans, there was on the other side of the road a farmer's wife named Marie Claude; the Valjean children, who were always famished, sometimes went in their mother's name to borrow a pint of milk, which they would drink behind a hedge or in some corner of the lane, snatching away the pitcher so greedily, one from another, that the little girls would spill it upon their aprons and their necks; if their mother had known of this exploit she would have punished the delinquents severely, so Jean Valjean, rough and grumbler as he was, paid Marie Claude; their mother never knew it, and so the children escaped.

He earned in the pruning season 18 sous a day; after

that he hired out as reaper, workman, teamster, or laborer. He did whatever he could find to do. His sister worked also, but what could she do with seven little children? It was a sad group, which misery was grasping and closing upon, little by little. There was a very severe winter; Jean had no work, the family had no bread; literally no bread and seven children.

One Sunday night Maubert Isabeau, the baker on the Place de l'Eglise, in Faverolles, was just going to bed when he heard a violent blow against the barred window of his shop. He got down in time to see an arm thrust through the aperture made by the blow of a fist on the glass. The arm seized a loaf of bread and took it out. Isabeau rushed out; the thief used his legs valiantly; Isabeau pursued him and caught him. The thief had thrown away the bread, but his arm was still bleeding. It was Jean Valjean.

All that happened in 1795. Jean Valjean was brought before the tribunals of the time for "burglary at night in an inhabited house." He had a gun which he used as well as any marksman in the world, and was something of a poacher, which hurt him, there being a natural prejudice against poachers. The poacher, like the smuggler, approaches very nearly to the brigand. We must say, however, by the way, that there is yet a deep gulf between this race of men and the hideous assassin of the city. The poacher dwells in the forest and the smuggler in the mountains or upon the sea; cities produce ferocious men because they produce corrupt men; the mountains, the forest, and the sea render men savage; they develop the fierce, but yet do not destroy the human.

Jean Valjean was found guilty; the terms of the code were explicit: in our civilization there are fearful hours, such as those when the criminal law pronounces shipwreck upon a man. What a mournful moment is that in which society withdraws itself and gives up a thinking being forever. Jean Valjean was sentenced to five years in the galleys.

On the 22d of April, 1796, there was announced in Paris the victory of Montenotte, achieved by the commanding-general of the army of Italy, whom the message of the Directory, to the Five Hundred, of the 2d Floréal, year IV, called Bonaparte; that same day a great chain was

riveted at the Bicêtre. Jean Valjean was a part of this chain. An old turnkey of the prison, now nearly ninety, well remembers this miserable man, who was ironed at the end of the fourth plinth in the north angle of the court. Sitting on the ground like the rest, he seemed to comprehend nothing of his position, except its horror; probably there was also mingled with the vague ideas of a poor, ignorant man a notion that there was something excessive in the penalty. While they were with heavy hammer-strokes behind his head riveting the bolt of his iron collar he was weeping. The tears choked his words, and he only succeeded in saying from time to time: "I was a pruner at Faverolles." Then, sobbing as he was, he raised his right hand and lowered it seven times, as if he was touching seven heads of unequal height, and at this gesture one could guess that whatever he had done had been to feed and clothe seven little children.

He was taken to Toulon, at which place he arrived after a journey of twenty-seven days on a cart, the chain still about his neck. At Toulon he was dressed in a red blouse; all his past life was effaced, even to his name. He was no longer Jean Valjean; he was No. 24,601. What became of the sister? What became of the seven children? Who troubled himself about that? What becomes of the handful of leaves of the young tree when it is sawed at the trunk?

It is the old story. These poor, little lives, these creatures of God, henceforth without support, or guide, or asylum; they passed away wherever chance led, who knows even? Each took a different path, it may be, and sank, little by little, into the chilling dark which engulfs solitary destinies; that sullen gloom where are lost so many ill-fated souls in the sombre advance of the human race. They left that region; the church of what had been their village forgot them; the stile of what had been their field forgot them; after a few years in the galleys even Jean Valjean forgot them. In that heart, in which there had been a wound, there was a scar—that was all. During the time he was at Toulon he heard but once of his sister; that was, I think, at the end of the fourth year of his confinement. I do not know how the news reached him; some one who had known him at home had seen his sister. She

was in Paris, living in a poor street near St. Sulpice, the Rue du Geindre. She had with her but one child, the youngest, a little boy. Where were the other six? She did not know herself, perhaps. Every morning she went to a bindery, No. 3 Rue du Sabot, where she was employed as a folder and book-stitcher. She had to be there by six in the morning, long before the dawn in the winter. In the same building with the bindery there was a school, where she sent her little boy, seven years old. As the school did not open until seven o'clock, and she must be at her work at six, her boy had to wait in the yard an hour until the school opened—an hour of cold and darkness in the winter. They would not let the child wait in the bindery because he was troublesome, they said. The workmen, as they passed in the morning, saw the poor little fellow sometimes sitting on the pavement nodding with weariness and often sleeping in the dark, crouched and bent over his basket. When it rained an old woman, the portress, took pity on him; she let him come into her lodge, the furniture of which was only a pallet bed, a spinning-wheel, and two wooden chairs; and the little one slept there in a corner, hugging the cat to keep himself warm. At seven o'clock the school opened and he went in. That is what was told Jean Valjean. It was as if a window had suddenly been opened, looking upon the destiny of those he had loved, and then all was closed again, and he heard nothing more forever. Nothing more came to him; he had not seen them, never will he see them again, and through the remainder of this sad history we shall not meet them again.

Near the end of this fourth year his chance of liberty came to Jean Valjean. His comrades helped him as they always do in that dreary place, and he escaped. He wandered two days in freedom through the fields; if it is freedom to be hunted, to turn your head each moment, to tremble at the least noise, to be afraid of everything, of the smoke of a chimney, the passing of a man, the baying of a dog, the gallop of a horse, the striking of a clock, of the day because you see, and of the night because you do not; of the road, of the path, the bush, of sleep. During the evening of the second day he was retaken; he had neither eaten nor slept for thirty-six hours. The maritime tribunal extended his sentence three years for this attempt,

which made eight. In the sixth year his turn of escape came again; he tried it, but failed again. He did not answer at roll-call, and the alarm cannon was fired. At night the people of the vicinity discovered him hidden beneath the keel of a vessel on the stocks; he resisted the galley guard which seized him. Escape and resistance. This the provisions of the special code punished by an addition of five years, two with the double chain. Thirteen years. The tenth year his turn came round again; he made another attempt with no better success. Three years for this new attempt. Sixteen years. And finally, I think, it was in the thirteenth year, he made yet another, and was retaken after an absence of only four hours. Three years for these four hours. Nineteen years. In October, 1815, he was set at large; he had entered in 1796 for having broken a pane of glass and taken a loaf of bread.

This is a place for a short parenthesis. This is the second time, in his studies on the penal question and on the sentences of the law, that the author of this book has met with the theft of a loaf of bread as the starting-point of the ruin of a destiny. Claude Gueux stole a loaf of bread; Jean Valjean stole a loaf of bread; English statistics show that in London starvation is the immediate cause of four thefts out of five.

Jean Valjean entered the galleys sobbing and shuddering; he went out hardened; he entered in despair; he went out sullen.

What has been the life of this soul?

VII

THE DEPTHS OF DESPAIR

LET us endeavor to tell.

It is an imperative necessity that society should look into these things; they are its own works.

He was, as we have said, ignorant; but he was not imbecile. The natural light was enkindled in him. Misfortune, which has also its illumination, added to the few rays he had in his mind. Under the whip, under the chain, in the cell, in fatigue, under the burning sun of the galleys, upon the convict's bed of plank, he turned to his own conscience and reflected.

He constituted himself a tribunal.

He began by arraigning himself.

He recognized that he was not an innocent man, unjustly punished. He acknowledged that he had committed an extreme and blamable action; that the loaf perhaps would not have been refused him had he asked for it; that at all events it would have been better to wait, either for pity or for work; that it is not altogether an unanswerable reply to say: "Could I wait when I was hungry?" That, in the first place, it is very rare that any one dies of actual hunger; and that, fortunately or unfortunately, man is so made that he can suffer long and much, morally and physically, without dying; and that he should, therefore, have had patience; that that would have been better even for those poor little ones; that it was an act of folly in him, poor, worthless man, to seize society in all its strength, forcibly by the collar and imagine that he could escape from misery by theft; that that was, at all events, a bad door for getting out of misery by which one entered into infamy; in short, that he had done wrong.

Then he asked himself: If he were the only one who had done wrong in the course of his fatal history. If, in the first place, it were not a grievous thing that he, a workman, should have been in want of work; that he, an industrious man, should have lacked bread. If, moreover, the fault having been committed and avowed, the punishment had not been savage and excessive. If there were not a greater abuse, on the part of the law, in the penalty, than there had been, on the part of the guilty, in the crime. If there were not an excess of weight in one of the scales of the balance—on the side of the expiation. If the discharge of the penalty were not the effacement of the crime; and if the result were not to reverse the situation, to replace the wrong of the delinquent by the wrong of the repression, to make a victim of the guilty and a creditor of the debtor and actually to put the right on the side of him who had violated it. If that penalty, taken in connection with its successive extensions for his attempts to escape, had not at last come to be a sort of outrage of the stronger on the weaker, a crime of society toward the individual, a crime which was committed afresh every day, a crime which had endured for nineteen years.

He questioned himself if human society could have the right alike to crush its members, in the one case by its unreasonable carelessness and in the other by its pitiless care; and to keep a poor man forever between a lack and an excess, a lack of work, an excess of punishment.

If it were not outrageous that society should treat with such rigid precision those of its members who were most poorly endowed in the distribution of wealth that chance had made and who were, therefore, most worthy of indulgence.

These questions asked and decided, he condemned society and sentenced it.

He sentenced it to his hatred.

He made it responsible for the doom which he had undergone and promised himself that he, perhaps, would not hesitate some day to call it to an account. He declared to himself that there was no equity between the injury that he had committed and the injury that had been committed on him; he concluded, in short, that his punishment was not, really, an injustice, but that beyond all doubt it was an iniquity.

Anger may be foolish and absurd and one may be irritated when in the wrong, but a man never feels outraged unless in some respect he is at bottom right. Jean Valjean felt outraged.

And then, human society had done him nothing but injury; never had he seen anything of her but this wrathful face which she calls justice and which she shows to those whom she strikes down. No man had ever touched him but to bruise him. All his contact with men had been by blows. Never, since his infancy, since his mother, since his sister, never had he been greeted with a friendly word or a kind regard. Through suffering on suffering he came little by little to the conviction that life was a war, and that in that war he was the vanquished. He had no weapon but his hate. He resolved to sharpen it in the galleys and to take it with him when he went out.

There was at Toulon a school for the prisoners, conducted by some not very skilful friars, where the most essential branches were taught to such of these poor men as were willing. He was one of the willing ones. He went to the school at the age of forty and learned to read, write,

and cipher. He felt that to increase his knowledge was to strengthen his hatred. Under certain circumstances, instruction and enlightenment may serve as rallying points for evil.

It is sad to tell, but after having tried society, which had caused his misfortune, he tried Providence, which created society and condemned it also.

Thus, during those nineteen years of torture and slavery, did his soul rise and fall at the same time. Light entered on the one side and darkness on the other.

Jean Valjean was not, we have seen, of an evil nature. His heart was still right when he arrived at the galleys. While there he condemned society and felt that he became wicked; he condemned Providence and felt that he became impious.

It is difficult not to reflect a moment here.

Can human nature be so entirely transformed from top to bottom? Can man, created good by God, be made wicked by man? Can the soul be changed to keep pace with its destiny and become evil when its destiny is evil? Can the heart become distorted and contract deformities and infirmities that are incurable, under the pressure of a disproportionate woe, like the vertebral column under a too heavy brain? Is there not in every human soul, was there not in the particular soul of Jean Valjean, a primitive spark, a divine element, incorruptible in this world, immortal in the next, which can be developed by good, kindled, lighted up and made resplendently radiant, and which evil can never entirely extinguish?

Grave and obscure questions, to the last of which every physiologist would probably, without hesitation, have answered *no,* had he seen at Toulon, during the hours of rest, which to Jean Valjean were hours of thought, this gloomy galley slave, seated, with folded arms, upon the bar of some windlass, the end of his chain stuck into his pocket that it might not drag, serious, silent, and thoughtful, a pariah of the law which views man with wrath, condemned by civilization which views heaven with severity.

Certainly, we will not conceal it, such a physiologist would have seen in Jean Valjean an irremediable misery; he would, perhaps, have lamented the disease occasioned by the law; but he would not even have attempted a cure·

he would have turned from the sight of the caverns which he would have beheld in that soul; and, like Dante at the gate of hell, he would have wiped out from that existence the word which the finger of God has, nevertheless, written upon the brow of every man—*Hope!*

Was that state of mind which we have attempted to analyze as perfectly clear to Jean Valjean as we have tried to render it to our readers? Did Jean Valjean distinctly see, after their formation, and had he distinctly seen, while they were forming, all the elements of which his moral misery was made up? Had this rude and unlettered man taken accurate account of the succession of ideas by which he had, step by step, risen and fallen, till he had reached that mournful plane which for so many years already had marked the internal horizon of his mind? Had he a clear consciousness of all that was passing within him and of all that was moving him? This we dare not affirm; we do not, in fact, believe it. Jean Valjean was too ignorant, even after so much ill-fortune, for nice discrimination in these matters. At times he did not even know exactly what were his feelings. Jean Valjean was in the dark; he suffered in the dark; he hated in the dark; we might say that he hated in his own sight. He lived constantly in this darkness, groping blindly and as in a dream. Only, at intervals, there broke over him suddenly from within or from without a shock of anger, an overflow of suffering, a quick, pallid flash, which lighted up his whole soul and showed all around him, before and behind, in the glare of a hideous light the fearful precipices and the sombre perspective of his fate.

The flash passed away; the night fell, and where was he? He no longer knew.

The peculiarity of punishment of this kind, in which what is pitiless, that is to say, what is brutalizing, predominates, is to transform little by little, by a slow stupefaction, a man into an animal, sometimes into a wild beast. Jean Valjean's repeated and obstinate attempts to escape are enough to prove that such is the strange effect of the law upon a human soul. Jean Valjean had renewed these attempts, so wholly useless and foolish, as often as an opportunity offered, without one moment's thought of the result or of the experience already undergone. He es-

caped wildly, like a wolf on seeing his cage-door open. Instinct said to him: "Away!" Reason said to him: "Stay!" But before a temptation so mighty reason fled; instinct alone remained. The beast alone was in play. When he was retaken the new severities that were inflicted upon him only made him still more fierce.

We must not omit one circumstance, which is, that in physical strength he far surpassed all the other inmates of the prison. At hard work, at twisting a cable or turning a windlass, Jean Valjean was equal to four men. He would sometimes lift and hold enormous weights on his back, and would occasionally act the part of what is called a *jack,* or what is called in old French an *orgeuil,* whence came the name, we may say, by the way, of the Rue Montorgeuil, near the Halles of Paris. His comrades had nicknamed him Jean the Jack. At one time, while the balcony of the city hall of Toulon was undergoing repairs, one of Puget's admirable caryatides, which support the balcony, slipped from its place, and was about to fall, when Jean Valjean, who happened to be there, held it up on his shoulder till the workmen came.

His suppleness surpassed his strength. Certain convicts, always planning escape, have developed a veritable science of strength and skill combined—the science of the muscles. A mysterious system of statics is practiced throughout daily by prisoners, who are eternally envying the birds and flies. To scale a wall and to find a foothold where you could hardly see a projection was play for Jean Valjean. Given an angle in a wall, with the tension of his back and knees, with elbows and hands braced against the rough face of the stone, he would ascend, as if by magic, to a third story. Sometimes he climbed up in this manner to the roof of the galleys.

He talked but little, and never laughed. Some extreme emotion was required to draw from him, once or twice a year, that lugubrious sound of the convict, which is like the echo of a demon's laugh. To those who saw him he seemed to be absorbed in continually looking upon something terrible.

He was absorbed in fact.

Through the diseased perceptions of an incomplete nature and a smothered intelligence, he vaguely felt that a

monstrous weight was over him. In that pallid and sullen shadow in which he crawled, whenever he turned his head and endeavored to raise his eyes, he saw, with mingled rage and terror, forming, massing and mounting up out of view above him with horrid escarpments, a kind of frightful accumulation of things, of laws, of prejudices of men and of acts, the outlines of which escaped him, the weight of which appalled him, and which was no other than that prodigious pyramid that we call civilization. Here and there in that shapeless and crawling mass, sometimes near at hand, sometimes afar off, and upon inaccessible heights, he distinguished some group, some detail vividly clear, here the jailer with his staff, here the gendarme with his sword, yonder the mitred archbishop; and on high, in a sort of blaze of glory, the emperor crowned and resplendent. It seemed to him that these distant splendors, far from dissipating his night, made it blacker and more deathly. All this, laws, prejudices, acts, men, things, went and came above him, according to the complicated and mysterious movement that God impresses upon civilization, marching over him and crushing him with an indescribably tranquil cruelty and inexorable indifference. Souls sunk to the bottom of possible misfortune, and unfortunate men lost in the lowest depths, where they are no longer seen, the rejected of the law, feel upon their heads the whole weight of that human society, so formidable to him who is without it, so terrible to him who is beneath it.

In such a situation Jean Valjean mused, and what could be the nature of his reflections?

If a millet seed under a millstone had thoughts, doubtless it would think what Jean Valjean thought.

All these things, realities full of spectres, phantasmagoria full of realities, had at last produced within him a condition which was almost inexpressible.

Sometimes in the midst of his work in the galleys he would stop and begin to think. His reason, more mature, and, at the same time, perturbed more than formerly, would revolt. All that had happened to him would appear absurd; all that surrounded him would appear impossible.

He would say to himself: "It is a dream." He would look at the jailer standing a few steps from him; the jailer

would seem to be a phantom; all at once this phantom would give him a blow with a stick.

For him the external world had scarcely an existence. It would be almost true to say that for Jean Valjean there was no sun, no beautiful summer days, no radiant sky, no fresh April dawn. Some dim window light was all that shone in his soul.

To sum up, in conclusion, what can be summed up and reduced to positive results, of all that we have been showing, we will make sure only of this, that in the course of nineteen years Jean Valjean, the inoffensive pruner of Faverolles, the terrible galley slave of Toulon, had become capable, thanks to the training he had received in the galleys, of two species of crimes: first, a sudden, unpremeditated action, full of rashness, all instinct, a sort of reprisal for the wrong he had suffered; second, a serious, premeditated act, discussed by his conscience and pondered over with the false ideas which such a fate will give. His premeditations passed through the three successive phases to which natures of a certain stamp are limited—reason, will, and obstinacy. He had as motives habitual indignation, bitterness of soul, a deep sense of injuries suffered, a reaction even against the good, the innocent and the upright, if any such there are. The beginning as well as the end of all his thoughts was hatred of human law; that hatred which, if it be not checked in its growth by some providential event, becomes, in a certain time, hatred of society, then hatred of the human race, and then hatred of creation, and reveals itself by a vague and incessant desire to injure some living being, it matters not who. So the passport was right which described Jean Valjean as *a very dangerous man.*

From year to year this soul had withered more and more, slowly, but fatally. With this withered heart he had a dry eye. When he left the galleys he had not shed a tear for nineteen years.

VIII

THE WATERS AND THE SHADOW

A MAN overboard!

What matters it! the ship does not stop. The wind is blowing, that dark ship must keep on her destined course. She passes away.

The man disappears, then reappears, he plunges and rises again to the surface, he calls, he stretches out his hands, they hear him not; the ship, staggering under the gale, is straining every rope, the sailors and passengers see the drowning man no longer; his miserable head is but a point in the vastness of the billows.

He hurls cries of despair into the depths. What a spectre is that disappearing sail! He looks upon it, he looks upon it with frenzy. It moves away; it grows dim; it diminishes. He was there but just now, he was one of the crew, he went and came upon the deck with the rest, he had his share of the air and of the sunlight, he was a living man. Now, what has become of him? He slipped, he fell; and it is finished.

He is in the monstrous deep. He has nothing under his feet but the yielding, fleeing element. The waves, torn and scattered by the wind, close round him hideously; the rolling of the abyss bears him along; shreds of water are flying about his head; a populace of waves spit upon him; confused openings half swallow him; when he sinks he catches glimpses of yawning precipices full of darkness; fearful unknown vegetations seize upon him, bind his feet and draw him to themselves; he feels that he is becoming the great deep; he makes part of the foam; the billows toss him from one to the other; he tastes the bitterness; the greedy ocean is eager to devour him; the monster plays with his agony. It seems as if all this were liquid hate.

But yet he struggles.

He tries to defend himself; he tries to sustain himself; he struggles; he swims. He—that poor strength that fails so soon—he combats the unfailing.

Where now is the ship? Far away yonder. Hardly visible in the pallid gloom of the horizon.

The wind blows in gusts; the billows overwhelm him.

He raises his eyes, but sees only the livid clouds. He, in his dying agony, makes part of this immense insanity of the sea. He is tortured to his death by its immeasurable madness. He hears sounds, which are strange to man, sounds which seem to come not from the earth, but from some frightful realm beyond.

There are birds in the clouds, even as there are angels above human distresses, but what can they do for him? They fly, sing and float, while he is gasping.

He feels that he is buried at once by those two infinites, the ocean and the sky; the one is a tomb, the other a pall.

Night descends, he has been swimming for hours, his strength is almost exhaused; that ship, that far-off thing, where there were men, is gone; he is alone in the terrible gloom of the abyss; he sinks, he strains, he struggles, he feels beneath him the shadowy monsters of the unseen; he shouts.

Men are no more. Where is God?

He shouts: "Help! help!" He shouts incessantly.

Nothing in the horizon. Nothing in the sky.

He implores the blue vault, the waves, the rocks; all are deaf. He supplicates the tempest; the imperturbable tempest obeys only the infinite.

Around him are darkness, storm, solitude, wild and unconscious tumult, the ceaseless tumbling of the fierce waters! within him, horror and exhaustion. Beneath him the engulfing abyss. No resting-place. He thinks of the shadowy adventures of his lifeless body in the limitless gloom. The biting cold paralyzes him. His hands clutch spasmodically and grasp at nothing. Winds, clouds, whirlwinds, blasts, stars, all useless. What shall he do? He yields to despair; worn out, he seeks death; he no longer resists; he gives himself up; he abandons the contest, and he is rolled away into the dismal depths of the abyss forever.

Oh, implacable march of human society! Destruction of men and of souls marking its path! Ocean, where fall all that the law lets fall! Ominous disappearance of aid! Oh, moral death!

The sea is the inexorable night into which the penal law casts its victims. The sea is the measureless misery.

The soul drifting in that sea may become a corpse. Who shall restore it to life?

IX

NEW GRIEFS

WHEN the time for leaving the galleys came, and when there were sounded in the ear of Jean Valjean the strange words: *You are free!* the moment seemed improbable and unreal; a ray of living light, a ray of the true light of living men, suddenly penetrated his soul. But this ray quickly faded away. Jean Valjean had been dazzled with the idea of liberty. He had believed in a new life. He soon saw what sort of liberty that is which has a yellow passport.

And along with that there were many bitter experiences. He had calculated that his savings, during his stay at the galleys, would amount to 171 francs. It is proper to say that he had forgotten to take into account the compulsory rest on Sundays and holidays, which, in nineteen years, required a deduction of about 24 francs. However that might be, his savings had been reduced, by various local charges, to the sum of 109 francs and 15 sous, which was counted out to him on his departure.

He understood nothing of this, and thought himself wronged, or, to speak plainly, robbed.

The day after his liberation he saw before the door of an orange-flower distillery at Grasse, some men who were unloading bags. He offered his services. They were in need of help and accepted him. He set at work. He was intelligent, robust, and handy; he did his best; the foreman appeared to be satisfied. While he was at work a gendarme passed, noticed him, and asked for his papers. He was compelled to show the yellow passport. That done, Jean Valjean resumed his work. A little while before, he had asked one of the laborers how much they were paid per day for this work, and the reply was 30 sous. At night, as he was obliged to leave the town next morning, he went to the foreman of the distillery and asked for his pay. The foreman did not say a word, but handed him 15 sous. He remonstrated. The man replied: "That is good enough for you." He insisted. The foreman looked him in the eyes and said: "Look out for the lock-up!"

There again he thought himself robbed.

Society, the state, in reducing his savings, had robbed him by wholesale. Now it was the turn of the individual, who was robbing him by retail.

Liberation is not deliverance. A convict may leave the galleys behind, but not his condemnation.

This was what befell him at Grasse. We have seen how he was received at D——.

X

THE MAN AWAKES

AS the cathedral clock struck two, Jean Valjean awoke. What awakened him was, too good a bed. For nearly twenty years he had not slept in a bed, and, although he had not undressed, the sensation was too novel not to disturb his sleep.

He had slept something more than four hours. His fatigue had passed away. He was not accustomed to give many hours to repose.

He opened his eyes and looked for a moment into the obscurity about him, then he closed them to go to sleep again.

When many diverse sensations have disturbed the day, when the mind is preoccupied, we can fall asleep once, but not a second time. Sleep comes at first much more readily than it comes again. Such was the case with Jean Valjean. He could not get to sleep again, and so he began to think.

He was in one of those moods in which the ideas we have in our minds are perturbed. There was a kind of vague ebb and flow in his brain. His oldest and his latest memories floated about pell-mell, and crossed each other confusedly, losing their own shapes, swelling beyond measure, then disappearing all at once, as if in a muddy and troubled stream. Many thoughts came to him, but there was one which continually presented itself, and which drove away all others. What that thought was we shall tell directly. He had noticed the six silver plates and the large ladle that Mme. Magloire had put on the table.

Those six silver plates took possession of him. There they were within a few steps. At the very moment that

he passed through the middle room to reach the one he was now in, the old servant was placing them in a little cupboard at the head of the bed. He had marked that cupboard well; on the right, coming from the dining-room. They were solid, and old silver. With the big ladle they would bring, at least, 200 francs; double what he had got for nineteen years' labor. True; he would have got more if the *government* had not *robbed* him.

His mind wavered a whole hour and a long one, in fluctuation and in struggle. The clock struck three. He opened his eyes, rose up hastily in bed, reached out his arm and felt his knapsack, which he had put into the corner of the alcove, then he thrust out his legs and placed his feet on the floor and found himself, he knew not how, seated on his bed.

He remained for some time lost in thought in that attitude, which would have had a rather ominous look had any one seen him there in the dusk—he only awake in the slumbering house. All at once he stooped down, took off his shoes and put them softly upon the mat in front of the bed, then he resumed his thinking posture and was still again.

In that hideous meditation the ideas which we have pointed out troubled his brain without ceasing, entered, departed, returned, and became a sort of weight upon him; and then he thought, too, he knew not why, and with that mechanical obstinacy that belongs to reverie, of a convict named Brevet, whom he had known in the galleys, and whose trousers were only held up by a single knit cotton suspender. The checked pattern of that suspender came continually before his mind.

He continued in this situation and would, perhaps, have remained there until daybreak, if the clock had not struck the quarter or the half-hour. The clock seemed to say to him, "Come along!"

He rose to his feet, hesitated for a moment longer, and listened; all was still in the house; he walked straight and cautiously toward the window which he could discern. The night was not very dark; there was a full moon, across which large clouds were driving before the wind. This produced alternations of light and shade, out-of-doors eclipses and illuminations, and indoors a kind of glimmer. This glim-

mer, enough to enable him to find his way, changing with the passing clouds, resembled that sort of livid light which falls through the window of a dungeon before which men are passing and repassing. On reaching the window Jean Valjean examined it. It had no bars, opened into the garden, and was fastened, according to the fashion of the country, with a little wedge only. He opened it; but as the cold, keen air rushed into the room he closed it again immediately. He looked into the garden with that absorbed look which studies rather than sees. The garden was inclosed with a white wall, quite low and readily scaled. Beyond, against the sky, he distinguished the tops of trees at equal distances apart, which showed that this wall separated the garden from an avenue or a lane planted with trees.

When he had taken this observation he turned like a man whose mind is made up, went to his alcove, took his knapsack, opened it, fumbled in it, took out something which he laid upon the bed, put his shoes into one of his pockets, tied up his bundle, swung it upon his shoulders, put on his cap, and pulled the visor down over his eyes, felt for his stick, and went and put it in the corner of the window, then returned to the bed, and resolutely took up the object which he had laid on it. It looked like a short iron bar, pointed at one end like a spear.

It would have been hard to distinguish in the darkness for what use this piece of iron had been made. Could it be a lever? Could it be a club?

In the daytime it would have been seen to be nothing but a miner's drill. At that time the convicts were sometimes employed in quarrying stone on the high hills that surround Toulon, and they often had miners' tools in their possession. Miners' drills are of solid iron, terminating at the lower end in a point, by means of which they are sunk into the rock.

He took the drill in his right hand, and, holding his breath, with stealthy steps he moved toward the door of the next room, which was the bishop's, as we know. On reaching the door he found it unlatched. The bishop had not closed it.

XI

WHAT HE DOES

JEAN VALJEAN listened. Not a sound.

He pushed the door.

He pushed it lightly with the end of his finger, with the stealthy and timorous carefulness of a cat. The door yielded to the pressure with a silent, imperceptible movement, which made the opening a little wider.

He waited a moment and then pushed the door again more boldly.

It yielded gradually and silently. The opening was now wide enough for him to pass through; but there was a small table near the door, which with it formed a troublesome angle and which barred the entrance.

Jean Valjean saw the obstacle. At all hazards the opening must be made still wider.

He so determined, and pushed the door a third time, harder than before. This time a rusty hinge suddenly sent out into the darkness a harsh and prolonged creak.

Jean Valjean shivered. The noise of this hinge sounded in his ears as clear and terrible as the trumpet of the judgment day.

In the fantastic exaggeration of the first moment he almost imagined that this hinge had become animate and suddenly endowed with a terrible life; and that it was barking like a dog to warn everybody and rouse the sleepers.

He stopped, shuddering and distracted, and dropped from his tiptoes to his feet. He felt the pulses of his temples beat like trip-hammers, and it appeared to him that his breath came from his chest with the roar of wind from a cavern. It seemed impossible that the horrible sound of this incensed hinge had not shaken the whole house with the shock of an earthquake; the door pushed by him had taken the alarm, and had called out; the old man would arise; the two old women would scream; help would come; in a quarter of an hour the town would be alive with it and the gendarmes in pursuit. For a moment he thought he was lost.

He stood still, petrified like the pillar of salt, not daring to stir. Some minutes passed. The door was wide open; he ventured to look into the room. Nothing had moved. He listened. Nothing was stirring in the house. The noise of the rusty hinge had awakened nobody.

The first danger was over, but still he felt within him a frightful tumult. Nevertheless he did not flinch. Not even when he thought he was lost had he flinched. His only thought was to make an end of it quickly. He took one step and was in the room.

A deep calm filled the chamber. Here and there indistinct, confused forms could be distinguished; which by day were papers scattered over a table, open folios, books piled on a stool, an armchair with clothes on it, a *prie-Dieu,* but now were only dark corners and whitish spots. Jean Valjean advanced, carefully avoiding the furniture. At the further end of the room he could hear the equal and quiet breathing of the sleeping bishop.

Suddenly he stopped; he was near the bed, he had reached it sooner than he thought.

Nature sometimes joins her effects and her appearances to our acts with a sort of serious and intelligent appropriateness, as if she would compel us to reflect. For nearly a half-hour a great cloud had darkened the sky. At the moment when Jean Valjean paused before the bed the cloud broke as if purposely, and a ray of moonlight crossing the high window suddenly lighted up the bishop's pale face. He slept tranquilly. He was almost entirely dressed, though in bed, on account of the cold nights of the lower Alps, with a dark woolen garment which covered his arms to the wrists. His head had fallen on the pillow in the unstudied attitude of slumber; over the side of the bed hung his hand, ornamented with the pastoral ring, and which had done so many good deeds, so many pious acts. His entire countenance was lighted up with a vague expression of content, hope, and happiness. It was more than a smile and almost a radiance. On his forehead rested the indescribable reflection of an unseen light. The souls of the upright in sleep have visions of a mysterious heaven.

A reflection from this heaven shone upon the bishop.

But it was also a luminous transparency, for this heaven was within him; this heaven was his conscience.

At the instant when the moonbeam overlay, so to speak, this inward radiance, the sleeping bishop appeared as if in a halo. But it was very mild and veiled in an ineffable twilight. The moon in the sky, nature drowsing, the garden without a pulse, the quiet house, the hour, the moment, the silence, added something strangely solemn and unutterable to the venerable repose of this man and enveloped his white locks and his closed eyes with a serene and majestic glory—this face where all was hope and confidence—this old man's head and infant's slumber.

There was something of divinity almost in this man, thus unconsciously august.

Jean Valjean was in the shadow with the iron drill in his hand, erect, motionless, terrified at this radiant figure. He had never seen anything comparable to it. This confidence filled him with fear. The moral world has no greater spectacle than this; a troubled and restless conscience on the verge of committing an evil deed, contemplating the sleep of a good man.

This sleep in this solitude, with a neighbor such as he, contained a touch of the sublime, which he felt vaguely but powerfully.

None could have told what was within him, not even himself. To attempt to realize it the utmost violence must be imagined in the presence of the most extreme mildness. In his face nothing could be distinguished with certainty. It was a sort of haggard astonishment. He saw it; that was all. But what were his thoughts? It would have been impossible to guess. It was clear that he was moved and agitated. But of what nature was this emotion?

He did not remove his eyes from the old man. The only thing which was plain from his attitude and his countenance was a strange indecision. You would have said he was hesitating between two realms—that of the doomed and that of the saved. He appeared ready either to cleave this skull or to kiss this hand.

In a few moments he raised his left hand slowly to his forehead and took off his hat; then, letting his hand fall with the same slowness, Jean Valjean resumed his contemplations, his cap in his left hand, his club in his right, and his hair bristling on his fierce-looking head.

Under this frightful gaze the bishop still slept in profoundest peace.

The crucifix above the mantel-piece was dimly visible in the moonlight, apparently extending its arms toward both, with a benediction for one and a pardon for the other.

Suddenly Jean Valjean put on his cap, then passed quickly, without looking at the bishop, along the bed, straight to the cupboard which he perceived near its head; he raised the drill to force the lock; the key was in it; he opened it; the first thing he saw was the basket of silver, he took it, crossed the room with hasty stride, careless of noise, reached the door, entered the oratory, took his stick, stepped out, put the silver into his knapsack, threw away the basket, ran across the garden, leaped over the wall like a tiger, and fled.

XII

THE BISHOP AT WORK

THE next day at sunrise Mgr. Bienvenu was walking in the garden. Mme. Magloire ran toward him quite beside herself.

"Monseigneur, monseigneur," cried she, "does your greatness know where the silver basket is?"

"Yes," said the bishop.

"God be praised!" said she; "I did not know what had become of it?"

The bishop had just found the basket on a flower-bed. He gave it to Mme. Magloire and said: "There it is."

"Yes," said she, "but there is nothing in it. The silver?"

"Ah!" said the bishop, "it is the silver, then, that troubles you. I do not know where that is."

"Good heavens! it is stolen. The man who came last night stole it."

And in the twinkling of an eye, with all the agility of which her age was capable, Mme. Magloire ran to the oratory, went into the alcove, and came back to the bishop. The bishop was bending with some sadness over a cochlearia des Guillons, which the basket had broken in falling. He looked up at Mme. Magloire's cry: "Monseigneur, the man has gone! the silver is stolen!"

While she was uttering this exclamation her eyes fell on an angle of the garden where she saw traces of an escalade. A capstone of the wall had been thrown down.

"See, there is where he got out; he jumped into Cochefilet Lane. The abominable fellow! he has stolen our silver!"

The bishop was silent for a moment, then, raising his serious eyes, he said mildly to Mme. Magloire: "Now, first, did this silver belong to us?"

Mme. Magloire did not answer; after a moment the bishop continued: "Mme. Magloire, I have for a long time wrongfully withheld this silver; it belonged to the poor. Who was this man? A poor man evidently."

"Alas! alas!" returned Mme. Magloire. "It is not on my account or mademoiselle's; it is all the same to us. But it is on yours, monseigneur. What is monsieur going to eat from now?"

The bishop looked at her with amazement.

"How so! have we no tin plates?"

Mme. Magloire shrugged her shoulders.

"Tin smells."

"Well, then, iron plates."

Mme. Magloire made an expressive gesture.

"Iron tastes."

"Well," said the bishop, "then, wooden plates."

In a few minutes he was breakfasting at the same table at which Jean Valjean sat the night before. While he was breakfasting M. Bienvenu pleasantly remarked to his sister, who said nothing, and Mme. Magloire, who was grumbling to herself, that there was really no need even of a wooden spoon or fork to dip a piece of bread into a cup of milk.

"Was there ever such an idea?" said Mme. Magloire to herself, as she went backward and forward; "to take in a man like that, and to give him a bed beside him; and yet what a blessing it was he did nothing but steal! Oh, my stars! it makes the chills run over me when I think of it!"

Just as the brother and sister were rising from the table there was a knock at the door.

"Come in," said the bishop.

The door opened. A strange, fierce group appeared on

the threshold. Three men were holding a fourth by the collar. The three men were gendarmes; the fourth, Jean Valjean.

A brigadier of gendarmes, who appeared to head the group, was near the door. He advanced toward the bishop, giving a military salute: "Monseigneur," said he.

At this word Jean Valjean, who was sullen, and seemed entirely cast down, raised his head with a stupefied air.

"Monseigneur!" he murmured, "then it is not the curé!"

"Silence!" said a gendarme, "it is monseigneur, the bishop."

In the meantime Mgr. Bienvenu had approached as quickly as his great age permitted.

"Ah, there you are!" said he, looking toward Jean Valjean, "I am glad to see you. But I gave you the candlesticks also, which are silver like the rest, and would bring 200 francs. Why did you not take them along with your plates?"

Jean Valjean opened his eyes and looked at the bishop with an expression which no human tongue could describe.

"Monseigneur," said the brigadier, "then what this man said was true? We met him. He was going like a man who was running away and we arrested him in order to see. He had this silver."

"And he told you," interrupted the bishop, with a smile, "that it had been given him by a good old priest with whom he had passed the night. I see it all. And you brought him back here? It is all a mistake."

"If that is so," said the brigadier, "we can let him go."

"Certainly," replied the bishop.

The gendarmes released Jean Valjean, who shrank back.

"Is it true that they let me go?" he said in voice almost inarticulate, as if he were speaking in his sleep.

"Yes! you can go. Do you not understand?" said a gendarme.

"My friend," said the bishop, "before you go away here are your candlesticks; take them."

He went to the mantel-piece, took the two candlesticks and brought them to Jean Valjean. The two women beheld the action without a word, or gesture, or look that might disturb the bishop.

Jean Valjean was trembling in every limb. He took

the two candlesticks mechanically and with a wild appearance.

"Now," said the bishop, "go in peace. By the way, my friend, when you come again you need not come through the garden. You can always come in and go out by the front door. It is closed only with a latch, day or night."

Then turning to the gendarmes, he said: "Messieurs, you can retire." The gendarmes withdrew.

Jean Valjean felt like a man who is just about to faint.

The bishop approached him and said, in a low voice: "Forget not, never forget that you have promised me to use this silver to become an honest man."

Jean Valjean, who had no recollection of this promise, stood confounded. The bishop had laid much stress upon these words as he uttered them. He continued, solemnly: "Jean Valjean, my brother, you belong no longer to evil, but to good. It is your soul that I am buying for you. I withdraw it from dark thoughts and from the spirit of perdition and I give it to God!"

XIII

PETIT JERVAIS

JEAN VALJEAN went out of the city as if he were escaping. He made all haste to get into the open country, taking the first lanes and by-paths that offered, without noticing that he was every moment retracing his steps. He wandered thus all the morning. He had eaten nothing, but he felt no hunger. He was the prey of a multitude of new sensations. He felt somewhat angry, he knew not against whom. He could not have told whether he was touched or humiliated. There came over him, at times, a strange relenting which he struggled with and to which he opposed the hardening of his last twenty years. This condition wearied him. He saw with disquietude shaken within him that species of frightful calm which the injustice of his fate had given him. He asked himself what should replace it. At times he would really have liked better to be in prison with the gendarmes and that things had not happened thus; that would have

given him less agitation. Although the season was well advanced, there were yet here and there a few late flowers in the hedges, the odor of which, as it met him in his walk, recalled the memories of his childhood. These memories were almost insupportable, it was so long since they had occurred to him.

Unspeakable thoughts thus gathered in his mind the whole day.

As the sun was sinking toward the horizon, lengthening the shadow on the ground of the smallest pebble, Jean Valjean was seated behind a thicket in a large, reddish plain, an absolute desert. There was no horizon but the Alps. Not even the steeple of a village church. Jean Valjean might have been three leagues from D——. A bypath which crossed the plain passed a few steps from the thicket.

In the midst of this meditation, which would have heightened not a little the frightful effect of his rags to any one who might have met him, he heard a joyous sound.

He turned his head and saw coming along the path a little Savoyard a dozen years old, singing, with his hurdy-gurdy at his side and his marmot box on his back.

One of those pleasant and gay youngsters who go from place to place with their knees sticking through their trousers.

Always singing, the boy stopped from time to time, and played at tossing up some pieces of money that he had in his hand, probably his whole fortune. Among them was a 40-sou piece.

The boy stopped at the side of the thicket without seeing Jean Valjean and tossed up his handful of sous; until this time he had skilfully caught the whole of them upon the back of his hand.

Next time the 40-sou piece escaped him and rolled toward the thicket, near Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean put his foot upon it.

The boy, however, had followed the piece with his eye, and had seen where it went.

He was not frightened, and walked straight to the man.

It was an entirely solitary place. Far as the eye could reach there was no one on the plain or in the path. Nothing could be heard but the faint cries of a flock of birds of

passage that were flying across the sky at an immense height. The child turned his back to the sun, which made his hair like threads of gold and flushed the savage face of Jean Valjean with a lurid glow.

"Monsieur," said the little Savoyard, with that childish confidence which is made up of ignorance and innocence, "my piece?"

"What is your name?" said Jean Valjean.

"Petit Gervais, monsieur."

"Get out," said Jean Valjean.

"Monsieur," said the boy, "give me my piece."

Jean Valjean dropped his head and did not answer.

The child began again: "My piece, monsieur!"

Jean Valjean's eyes remained fixed on the ground.

"My piece!" exclaimed the boy, "my white piece! my silver!"

Jean Valjean did not appear to understand. The boy took him by the collar of his blouse and shook him. And at the same time he made an effort to move the big, iron-soled shoe which was placed upon his treasure.

"I want my piece! my 40-sou piece!"

The child began to cry. Jean Valjean raised his head. He still kept his seat. His look was troubled. He looked upon the boy with an air of wonder, then reached out his hand toward his stick, and exclaimed in a terrible voice: "Who is there?"

"Me, monsieur," answered the boy. "Petit Gervais! me! me! give me my 40 sous, if you please! Take away you foot, monsieur, if you please!" Then, becoming angry, small as he was, and almost threatening: "Come, now, will you take away your foot? Why don't you take away your foot?"

"Ah! you are here yet!" said Jean Valjean, and, rising hastily to his feet, without releasing the piece of money, he added: "You'd better take care of yourself!"

The boy looked at him in terror, then began to tremble from head to foot, and after a few seconds of stupor took to flight and ran with all his might, without daring to turn his head or to utter a cry.

At a little distance, however, he stopped for want of breath, and Jean Valjean, in his reverie, heard him sobbing.

In a few minutes the boy was gone.

The sun had gone down.

The shadows were deepening around Jean Valjean. He had not eaten during the day; probably he had some fever.

He had remained standing and had not changed his attitude since the child fled. His breathing was at long and unequal intervals. His eyes were fixed on a spot ten or twelve steps before him, and seemed to be studying with profound attention the form of an old piece of blue crockery that was lying in the grass. All at once he shivered; he began to feel the cold night air.

He pulled his cap down over his forehead, sought mechanically to fold and button his blouse around him, stepped forward and stooped to pick up his stick.

At that instant he perceived the 40-sou piece which his foot had half buried in the ground, and which glistened among the pebbles. It was like an electric shock. "What is that?" said he, between his teeth. He drew back a step or two, then stopped without the power to withdraw his gaze from this point which his foot had covered the instant before, as if the thing that glistened there in the obscurity had been an open eye fixed upon him.

After a few minutes he sprang convulsively toward the piece of money, seized it, and, rising, looked away over the plain, straining his eyes toward all points of the horizon, standing and trembling like a frightened deer which is seeking a place of refuge.

He saw nothing. Night was falling, the plain was cold and bare, thick purple mists were rising in the glimmering twilight.

He said: "Oh!" and began to walk rapidly in the direction in which the child had gone. After some thirty steps he stopped, looked about, and saw nothing.

Then he called with all his might: "Petit Gervais! Petit Gervais!"

And then he listened.

There was no answer.

The country was desolate and gloomy. On all sides was space. There was nothing about him but a shadow, in which his gaze was lost, and a silence, in which his voice was lost.

A biting norther was blowing, which gave a kind of dismal life to everything about him. The bushes shook their little thin arms with an incredible fury. One would have said that they were threatening and pursuing somebody.

He began to walk again, then quickened his pace to a run, and from time to time stopped and called out in that terrible solitude, in a most terrible and desolate voice: "Petit Gervais! Petit Gervais!"

Surely, if the child had heard him, he would have been frightened and would have hid himself. But doubtless the boy was already far away.

He met a priest on horseback. He went up to him and said: "M. l'Curé, have you seen a child go by?"

"No," said the priest.

"Petit Gervais was his name."

"I have seen nobody."

He took two 5-franc pieces from his bag and gave them to the priest.

"M. l'Curé, this is for your poor. M. l'Curé, he is a little fellow, about 10 years old, with a marmot, I think, and a hurdy-gurdy. He went this way. One of those Savoyards, you know?"

"I have not seen him."

"Petit Gervais? Is his village near here—can you tell me?"

"If it be as you say, my friend, the little fellow is a foreigner. They roam about this country. Nobody knows them."

Jean Valjean hastily took out two more 5-franc pieces and gave them to the priest.

"For your poor," said he.

Then he added, wildly: "M. l'Abbé, have me arrested; I am a robber."

The priest put spurs to his horse and fled in great fear.

Jean Valjean began to run again in the direction which he had first taken.

He went on in this wise for a considerable distance, looking around, calling and shouting, but met nobody else. Two or three times he left the path to look at what seemed to be somebody lying down or crouching; it was only low bushes or rocks. Finally, at a place where three paths met, he stopped. The moon had risen. He strained his

eyes in the distance and called out once more: "Petit Gervais! Petit Gervais! Petit Gervais!" His cries died away into the mist without even awakening an echo. Again he murmured: "Petit Gervais!" but with a feeble and almost inarticulate voice. That was his last effort; his knees suddenly bent under him, as if an invisible power overwhelmed him at a blow, with the weight of his bad conscience; he fell exhausted upon a great stone, his hands clinched in his hair, and his face on his knees, and exclaimed: "What a wretch I am!"

Then his heart swelled and he burst into tears. It was the first time he had wept for nineteen years.

When Jean Valjean left the bishop's house, as we have seen, his mood was one that he had never known before. He could understand nothing of what was passing within him. He set himself stubbornly in opposition to the angelic deeds and the gentle words of the old man: "You have promised me to become an honest man. I am purchasing your soul, I withdraw it from the spirit of perversity, and I give it to God Almighty." This came to him incessantly. To this celestial tenderness he opposed pride, which is the fortress of evil in man. He felt dimly that the pardon of this priest was the hardest assault and the most formidable attack which he had yet sustained; that his hardness of heart would be complete, if it resisted this kindness; that if he yielded, he must renounce that hatred with which the acts of other men had for so many years filled his soul, and in which he found satisfaction; that this time he must conquer or be conquered, and that the struggle, a gigantic and decisive struggle, had begun between his own wickedness and the goodness of this man.

In view of all these things he moved like a drunken man. While thus walking on, with haggard look, had he a distinct perception of what might be to him the result of his adventure at D——? Did he hear those mysterious murmurs which warn or entreat the spirit at certain moments of life? Did a voice whisper in his ear that he had just passed through the decisive hour of his destiny; that there was no longer a middle course for him; that if, thereafter, he should not be the best of men, he would be the worst; that he must now, so to speak, mount higher than the bishop or fall lower than the galley slave; that if he would

become good he must become an angel; that if he would remain wicked he must become a monster?

Here we must again ask those questions, which we have already proposed elsewhere; was some confused shadow of all this formed in his mind? Certainly, misfortune, we have said, draws out the intelligence; it is doubtful, however, if Jean Valjean was in a condition to discern all that we here point out. If these ideas occurred to him, he but caught a glimpse, he did not see; and the only effect was to throw him into an inexpressible and distressing confusion. Being just out of that misshapen and gloomy thing which is called the galleys, the bishop had hurt his soul, as a too vivid light would have hurt his eyes on coming out of the dark. The future life, the possible life that was offered to him thenceforth, all pure and radiant, filled him with trembling and anxiety. He no longer knew really where he was. Like an owl who should see the sun suddenly rise, the convict had been dazzled and blinded by virtue.

One thing was certain, nor did he himself doubt it, that he was no longer the same man, that all was changed in him, that it was no longer in his power to prevent the bishop from having talked to him and having touched him.

In this frame of mind he had met Petit Gervais and stolen his 40 sous. Why? He could not have explained it, surely; was it the final effect, the final effort of the evil thoughts he had brought from the galleys, a remnant of impulse, a result of what is called in physics *acquired force?* It was that, and it was also, perhaps, even less than that. We will say plainly, it was not he who had stolen; it was not the man, it was the beast which, from habit and instinct, had stupidly set its foot upon that money, while the intellect was struggling in the midst of so many new and unknown influences. When the intellect awoke and saw this act of the brute, Jean Valjean recoiled in anguish and uttered a cry of horror.

It was a strange phenomenon, possible only in the condition in which he then was, but the fact is, that in stealing this money from that child he had done a thing of which he was no longer capable.

However that may be, this last misdeed had a decisive effect upon him; it rushed across the chaos of his intellect

and dissipated it, set the light on one side and the dark clouds on the other, and acted upon his soul, in the condition it was in, as certain chemical re-agents act upon a turbid mixture, by precipitating one element and producing a clear solution of the other.

At first, even before self-examination and reflection, distractedly, like one who seeks to escape, he endeavored to find the boy to give him back his money; then, when he found that that was useless and impossible, he stopped in despair. At the very moment when he exclaimed: "What a wretch I am!" he saw himself as he was, and was already so far separated from himself that it seemed to him that he was only a phantom, and that he had there before him, in flesh and bone, with his stick in his hand, his blouse on his back, his knapsack filled with stolen articles on his shoulders, with his stern and gloomy face, and his thoughts full of abominable projects, the hideous galley slave, Jean Valjean.

Excess of misfortune, we have remarked, had made him in some sort a visionary. This then was like a vision. He veritably saw this Jean Valjean, this ominous face, before him. He was on the point of asking himself who that man was, and he was horror-stricken by it.

His brain was in one of those violent, and yet frightfully calm, conditions where reverie is so profound that it swallows up reality. We no longer see the objects that are before us, but we see, as if outside of ourselves, the forms that we have in our minds.

He beheld himself, then, so to speak, face to face, and at the same time, across that hallucination, he saw, at a mysterious distance, a sort of light which he took at first to be a torch. Examining more attentively this light which dawned upon his conscience, he recognized that it had a human form, and that this torch was the bishop.

His conscience weighed in turn these two men thus placed before it, the bishop and Jean Valjean. Anything less than the first would have failed to soften the second. By one of those singular effects which are peculiar to this kind of ecstasy, as his reverie continued the bishop grew grander and more resplendent in his eyes; Jean Valjean shrank and faded away. At one moment he was but a shadow. Suddenly he disappeared. The bishop alone remained.

He filled the whole soul of this wretched man with a magnificent radiance.

Jean Valjean wept long. He shed hot tears, he wept bitterly, with more weakness than a woman, with more terror than a child.

While he wept the light grew brighter and brighter in his mind—an extraordinary light, a light at once transporting and terrible. His past life, his first offence, his long expiation, his brutal exterior, his hardened interior, his release made glad by so many schemes of vengeance, what had happened to him at the bishop's, his last action, this theft of 40 sous from a child, a crime the meaner and the more monstrous that it came after the bishop's pardon; all this returned and appeared to him clearly, but in a light that he had never seen before. He beheld his life, and it seemed to him horrible; his soul, and it seemed to him frightful. There was, however, a softened light upon that life and upon that soul. It seemed to him that he was looking upon Satan by the light of paradise.

How long did he weep thus? What did he do after weeping? Where did he go? Nobody ever knew. It is known simply that, on that very night, the stage-driver who drove at that time on the Genoble route, and arrived at D—— about 3 o'clock in the morning, saw, as he passed through the bishop's street, a man in the attitude of prayer, kneeling upon the pavement in the shadow, before the door of Mgr. Bienvenu.

BOOK THIRD—IN THE YEAR 1817

I

IN THE YEAR 1817

THE year 1817 was that which Louis XVIII, with a certain royal assumption, not devoid of stateliness, styled the twenty-second year of his reign. It was the year when M. Bruguière de Sorsum was famous. All the hair-dressers' shops, hoping for the return of powder and birds of paradise, were bedizened with azure and fleurs-de-lis. It was the honest time, when Count Lynch sat every

Sunday as churchwarden on the official bench at Saint Germain des Prés, in the dress of a peer of France, with his red ribbon and long nose, and that majesty of profile peculiar to a man who has done a brilliant deed. The brilliant deed committed by M. Lynch was that, being mayor of Bordeaux on the 12th of March, 1814, he had surrendered the city a little too soon to the Duke of Angoulême. Hence his peerage. In 1817 it was the fashion to swallow up little boys from four to six years old in great morocco caps, with ears, strongly resembling the chimney-pots of the Esquimaux. The French army was dressed in white, after the Austrian style; regiments were called legions, and wore, instead of numbers, the names of the departments. Napoleon was at St. Helena and, as England would not give him green cloth, he had his old coats turned. In 1817 Pellegrini sang; Mdlle. Bigottini danced; Poitier reigned; Odry was not yet in existence. Mme. Saqui succeeded to Foriose. There were Prussians still in France. M. Delalot was a personage. Legitimacy had just asserted itself by cutting off the fist and then the head of Pleignier, Carbonneau, and Tolleron. Prince Talleyrand, the Grand Chamberlain, and Abbé Louis, the designated Minister of the Finances, looked each other in the face, laughing like two augurs; both had celebrated the mass of the federation in the Champ-de-Mars on the 14th of July, 1790; Talleyrand had said it as bishop, Louis had served him as deacon. In 1817, in the cross-walks of this same Champ-de-Mars, were seen huge wooden cylinders, painted blue, with traces of eagles and bees, that had lost their gilding, lying in the rain and rotting in the grass. These were the columns which, two years before, had supported the estrade of the Emperor in the Champ-de-Mai. They were blackened here and there from the bivouac-fires of the Austrians in barracks near the Gros-Caillou. Two or three of these columns had disappeared in the fires of these bivouacs, and had warmed the huge hands of the kaiserlics. The Champ-de-Mai was remarkable from the fact of having been held in the month of June, and on the Champ-de-Mars. In the year 1817 two things were popular—Voltaire-Touquet and Chartist snuff-boxes. The latest Parisian sensation was the crime of Dautun, who had thrown his brother's head into the fountain of the

Marché-aux-Fleurs. People were beginning to find fault with the Minister of the Navy for having no news of that fated frigate, *La Méduse,* which was to cover Chaumareix with shame and Géricault with glory. Colonel Selves went to Egypt, there to become Soliman Pasha. The palace of the Thermes, Rue de la Harpe, was turned into a cooper's shop. On the platform of the octagonal tower of the Hôtel de Cluny the little board shed was still to be seen, which had served as observatory to Messier, the astronomer of the navy under Louis XVI. The Duchess of Duras read to three or four friends, in her boudoir furnished in sky-blue satin, the manuscript of "Ourika." The N's were erased from the Louvre. The bridge of Austerlitz abdicated its name, and became the bridge of the Jardin-du-Roi, an enigma which disguised at once the bridge of Austerlitz and the Jardin-des-Plantes. Louis XVIII, absently annotating Horace with his finger-nail while thinking about heroes that had become emperors, and shoemakers that had become dauphins, had two cares—Napoleon and Mathurin Bruneau. The French Academy gave, as a prize theme, "The Happiness Which Study Procures." M. Bellart was eloquent, officially. In his shadow was seen taking root the future Attorney-General, de Broë, promised to the sarcasms of Paul Louis Courier. There was a counterfeit Chateaubriand, called Marchangy, as there was to be later a counterfeit Marchangy, called d'Arlincourt. "Claire d'Albe" and "Malek Adel" were masterpieces; Mme. Cottin was declared the first writer of the age. The Institute struck from its list the Academician, Napoleon Bonaparte. A royal ordinance established a naval school at Angoulême, for the Duke of Angoulême being grand admiral, it was evident that the town of Angoulême had by right all the qualities of a seaport, without which the monarchical principle would have been assailed. The question whether the pictures representing acrobats, which spiced the placards of Franconi and drew together the blackguards of the streets, should be tolerated, was agitated in the cabinet councils. M. Paër, the author of "L'Agnese," an honest man with square jaws and a wart on his cheek, directed the small, select concerts of the Marchioness de Sassenaye, Rue de le Ville-l'Evêque. All the young girls sang, "l'Ermite de

Saint Avelle," words by Edmond Géraud. The "Nain jaune" was transformed into the "Miroir." The Café Lemblin stood out for the Emperor in opposition to the Café Valois, which was in favor of the Bourbons. A marriage had just been made up with a Sicilian princess for the Duke of Berry, who was already in reality regarded with suspicion by Louvel. Mme. de Staël had been dead a year. Mlle. Mars was hissed by the body-guards. The great journals were all small. The form was limited, but the liberty was large. "Le Constitutional" was constitutional; "La Minerve" called Chateaubriand, *Chateaubriant.* This excited great laughter among the citizens at the expense of the great writer.

In purchased journals prostituted journalists insulted the outlaws of 1815; David no longer had talent, Arnault no longer had ability; Carnot no longer had probity, Soult had never gained a victory; it is true that Napoleon no longer had genius. Everybody knows that letters sent through the post to an exile rarely reach their destination, the police making it a religious duty to intercept them. This fact is by no means a new one; Descartes complained of it in his banishment. Now, David having shown some feeling in a Belgian journal at not receiving the letters addressed to him, this seemed ludicrous to the royalist papers, who seized the occasion to ridicule the exile. To say *regicides* instead of *voters, enemies* instead of *allies, Napoleon* instead of *Bonaparte,* separated two men more than an abyss. All people of common-sense agreed that the era of revolutions had been forever closed by King Louis XVIII, surnamed "The immortal author of the Charter." At the terreplain of the Pont Neuf the word *redivivus* was sculptured on the pedestal which awaited the statue of Henri IV. M. Piet at Rue Thérèse, No. 4, was sketching the plan of his cable to consolidate the monarchy. The leaders of the Right said in grave dilemmas: "We must write to Bacol." Messrs. Ganuel O'Mahony and Chappedelaine made a beginning, not altogether without the approbation of Monsieur, of what was afterward to become the "conspiracy of the Bord de l'Eau." L'Epingle Noire plotted on its side; Delaverderie held interviews with Trogoff; M. Decazes, a mind in some degree liberal, prevailed. Chateaubriand, standing every morning at his

window in the Rue Saint Dominique, No. 27, in stockings, pantaloons, and slippers, his gray hair covered with a Madras handkerchief, a mirror before his eyes, and a complete case of dental instruments open before him, cleaned his teeth, which were excellent, while dictating "La Monarchie selon la Charte" to M. Pilorge, his secretary. The critics in authority preferred Lafon to Talma. M. de Féletz signed himself "A"; M. Hoffman signed himself "Z." Charles Nodier was writing "Thérèse Aubert." Divorce was abolished. The lyceums called themselves colleges. The students, decorated on the collar with a golden fleur-de-lis, pommeled each other over the King of Rome. The secret police of the palace denounced to her Royal Highness, Madame, the portrait of the Duke of Orleans, which was everywhere to be seen, and which looked better in the uniform of colonel-general of hussars than the Duke of Berry in the uniform of colonel-general of dragoons—a serious matter. The city of Paris regilded the dome of the Invalides at its expense. Grave citizens asked each other what M. de Trinquelague would do in such or such a case; M. Clausel de Montals differed on sundry points from M. Clausel de Coussergues; M. de Salaberry was not satisfied. Comedy-writer Picard, of the Academy to which comedy-writer Molière could not belong, had "Les deux Philiberts" played at the Odéon, on the pediment of which the removal of the letters still permitted the inscription to be read distinctly: "Theâtre de l'Imperatrice." People took sides for or against Cugnet de Montarlot. Fabvier was factious; Bavoux was revolutionary. The book-seller Pelicier published an edition of Voltaire under the title "Works of Voltaire," of the French Academy. "That will attract buyers," said the naïve publisher. The general opinion was that M. Charles Loyson would be the genius of the age; envy was beginning to nibble at him, a sign of glory, and the line was made on him:

"Même quand Loyson vole on sent qu'il a despattes."

Cardinal Fesch refusing to resign, M. de Pins, Archbishop of Amasie, administered the diocese of Lyons. The quarrel of the Vallée des Dappes commenced between France and Switzerland by a memorial from Captain, afterward General, Dufour. Saint-Simon, unknown, was

building up his sublime dream. There was a celebrated Fourier in the Academy of Sciences whom posterity had forgotten, and an obscure Fourier in some unknown garret whom the future will remember. Lord Byron was beginning to dawn; a note to a poem of Millevoye introduced him to France as *a certain lord baron.* David d'Angers was endeavoring to knead marble. The Abbé Caron spoke with praise in a small party of seminarists in the cul-de-sac of the Feuillantines of an unknown priest, Félicité Robert by name, who was afterward Lamennais. A thing which smoked and clacked on the Seine, making the noise of a swimming dog, went and came beneath the windows of the Tuileries from the Pont Royal to the Pont Louis XV; it was a piece of mechanism of no great value, a sort of toy, the day-dream of a visionary inventor, a Utopia—a steamboat. The Parisians looked upon the useless thing with indifference. M. Vaublanc, wholesale reformer of the Institute by royal ordinance and distinguished author of several Academicians, after having made them could not make himself one. The Faubourg Saint-Germain and the Pavilion Marsan desired M. Deleveau for prefect of police on account of his piety. Dupuytren and Récamier quarreled in the amphitheatre of the Ecole de Médecine, and shook their fists in each other's faces over the divinity of Christ. Cuvier, with one eye on the book of Genesis and the other on nature, was endeavoring to please the bigoted reaction by reconciling fossils with texts and making the mastodons support Moses. M. Francois de Neufchâteau, the praiseworthy cultivator of the memory of Parmentier, was making earnest efforts to have *pomme de terre* pronounced *parmentiére* without success. Abbé Grégoire, ex-bishop, ex-member of the National Convention, and ex-senator, had passed to the condition of the "infamous Grégoire" in royalist polemics. The expression which we have just employed, "passed to the condition," was denounced as a neologism by M. Royer-Collard. The new stone could still be distinguished by its whiteness under the third arch of the bridge of Jena, which two years before had been used to stop up the entrance of the mine bored by Blücher to blow up the bridge. Justice summoned to her bar a man who had said aloud on seeing Count d'Artois entering Notre Dame: "Sapristi! I regret

the time when I saw Bonaparte and Talma entering the Bal-Sauvage arm in arm." Seditious language. Six months' imprisonment.

Traitors showed themselves stripped even of hypocrisy; men who had gone over to the enemy on the eve of a battle made no concealment of their bribes, and shamelessly walked abroad in daylight in the cynicism of wealth and dignities; deserters of Ligny and Quatre-Bras, in the brazenness of their purchased shame, exposed the nakedness of their devotion to monarchy, forgetting the commonest requirements of public decency.

Such was the confused mass of events that floated pell-mell on the surface of the year 1817, and is now forgotten. History neglects almost all these peculiarities, nor can it do otherwise; it is under the dominion of infinity. Nevertheless, these details, which are wrongly called little—there are neither little facts in humanity nor little leaves in vegetation—are useful. The physiognomy in the years makes up the face of the century.

In this year, 1817, four young Parisians played "a good farce."

II

DOUBLE QUATUOR

THESE Parisians were, one from Toulouse, another from Limoges, the third from Cahors, and the fourth from Montauban; but they were students, and to say student is to say Parisian, to study in Paris is to be born in Paris.

These young men were remarkable for nothing; everybody has seen such persons; the four first comers will serve as samples; neither good nor bad, neither learned nor ignorant, neither talented nor stupid; handsome in that charming April of life which we call twenty. There were four Oscars; for at this time, Arthurs were not yet in existence. "Burn the perfumes of Arabia in his honor," exclaims the romance. "Oscar approaches! Oscar, I am about to see him!" Ossian was in fashion, elegance was Scandinavian and Caledonian; the pure English did not prevail till later, and the first of the Arthurs, Wellington, had just won the victory of Waterloo.

The first of these Oscars was called Félix Tholomyès, of Toulouse; the second, Listolier, of Cahors; the third, Fameuil, of Limoges; and the last, Blacheville, of Montauban. Of course, each had his mistress. Blacheville loved Favorite, so called, because she had been in England; Listolier adored Dahlia, who had taken the name of a flower as her *nom de guerre;* Fameuil idolized Zéphine, the diminutive of Josephine, and Tholomyès had Fantine, called *the blonde,* on account of her beautiful hair, the color of the sun. Favorite, Dahlia, Zéphine, and Fantine were four enchanting girls, perfumed and sparkling, something of workwomen still, since they had not wholly given up the needle, agitated by love affairs, yet preserving on their countenances a remnant of the serenity of labor, and in their souls that flower of purity, which, in woman, survives the first fall. One of the four was called the child, because she was the youngest; and another was called the old one—the old one was 23. To conceal nothing, the first three were more experienced, more careless, and better versed in the ways of the world than Fantine, the blonde, who was still in her first illusion.

Dahlia, Zéphine, and Favorite especially, could not say as much. There had been already more than one episode in their scarcely commenced romance, and the lover called Adolphe in the first chapter was found as Alphonse in the second and Gustave in the third. Poverty and coquetry are fatal counselors; the one grumbles, the other flatters, and the beautiful daughters of the people have both whispering in their ear, each on its side. Their ill-guarded souls listen. Thence their fall and the stones that are cast at them. They are overwhelmed with the splendor of all that is immaculate and inaccessible. Alas! was the Jungfrau ever hungry?

Favorite, having been in England, was the admiration of Zéphine and Dahlia. She had had at a very early age a home of her own. Her father was a brutal, boasting old professor of mathematics, never married and a rake, despite his years. When young he one day saw the dress of a chambermaid catch in the fender, and fell in love through the accident. Favorite was the result. Occasionally she met her father, who touched his hat to her. One morning an old woman with a fanatical air entered

her rooms and asked: "You do not know me, mademoiselle?" "No." "I am your mother." The old woman directly opened the buffet, ate and drank her fill, sent for a bed that she had and made herself at home. This mother was a devotee and a grumbler; she never spoke to Favorite, remained for hours without uttering a word, breakfasted, dined, and supped for four, and went down to the porter's lodge to see visitors and talk ill of her daughter.

What had attracted Dahlia to Listolier, to others, perhaps, to indolence, was her beautiful, rosy finger-nails. How could such nails work! She who will remain virtuous must have no compassion for her hands. As to Zéphine, she had conquered Fameuil by her rebellious yet caressing little way of saying: "Yes, sir."

The young men were comrades, the young girls were friends. Such loves are always accompanied by such friendships.

Wisdom and philosophy are two things; a proof of which is that, with all necessary reservations for these little, irregular households, Favorite, Zéphine, and Dahlia were philosophic, and Fantine was wise.

"Wise!" you will say, and Tholomyès? Solomon would answer that love is a part of wisdom. We content ourselves with saying that the love of Fantine was a first, an only, a faithful love.

She was the only one of the four who had been petted by but one.

Fantine was one of those beings which are brought forth from the heart of the people. Sprung from the most unfathomable depths of social darkness, she bore on her brow the mark of the anonymous and unknown. She was born at M—— on M——. Who were her parents? None could tell; she had never known either father or mother. She was called Fantine—why so? because she had never been known by any other name. At the time of her birth the Directory was still in existence. She could have no family name, for she had no family; she could have no baptismal name, for then there was no church. She was named after the pleasure of the first passerby who found her, a mere infant, straying barefoot in the streets. She received a name as she received the water from the clouds on her head when it rained. She was

called little Fantine. Nobody knew anything more of her. Such was the manner in which this human being had come into life. At the age of ten Fantine left the city and went to service among the farmers of the suburbs. At the age of fifteen she came to Paris to "seek her fortune." Fantine was beautiful and remained pure as long as she could. She was a pretty blonde with fine teeth. She had gold and pearls for her dowry; but the gold was on her head and the pearls in her mouth.

She worked to live; then, also to live, for the heart too, has its hunger, she loved.

She loved Tholomyès.

To him it was an amour; to her, a passion. The streets of the Latin quarter, which swarm with students and grisettes, saw the beginning of this dream. Fantine, in those labyrinths of the hill of the Pantheon, where so many ties are knotted and unloosed, long fled from Tholomyès, but in such a way as to always meet him again. There is a way of avoiding a person which resembles a search. In short, the eclogue took place.

Blacheville, Listolier, and Fameuil formed a sort of group of which Tholomyès was the head. He was the wit of the company.

Tholomyès was an old student of the old style; he was rich, having an income of 4,000 francs—a splendid scandal on the Montagne Sainte-Geneviève. He was a good liver, thirty years old and ill-preserved. He was wrinkled, his teeth were broken, and he was beginning to show signs of baldness, of which he said, gayly: "The head at thirty, the knees at forty." His digestion was not good and he had a weeping eye. But, in proportion as his youth died out, his gayety increased; he replaced his teeth by jests, his hair by joy, his health by irony, and his weeping eye was always laughing. He was dilapidated, but covered with flowers. His youth, decamping long before its time, was beating a retreat in good order, bursting with laughter and displaying no loss of fire. He had had a piece refused at the Vaudeville; he made verses now and then on any subject; moreover, he doubted everything with an air of superiority—a great power in the eyes of the weak. So, being bald and ironical, he was the chief. Can the word *iron* be the root from which irony is derived?

One day Tholomyès took the other three aside and said to them with an oracular gesture: "For nearly a year Fantine, Dahlia, Zéphine, and Favorite have been asking us to give them a surprise; we have solemnly promised them one. They are constantly reminding us of it, me especially. Just as the old women at Naples cry to St. January, 'Faccia gialluta, fa o miracolo' — 'yellow face, do your miracle,' our pretty ones are always saying: 'Tholomyès, when are you going to be delivered of your surprise?' At the same time our parents are writing for us. Two birds with one stone. It seems to me the time has come. Let us talk it over."

Upon this, Tholomyès lowered his voice and mysteriously articulated something so ludicrous that a prolonged and enthusiastic giggling arose from the four throats at once, and Blacheville exclaimed: "What an idea!"

An ale-house, filled with smoke, was before them; they entered, and the rest of their conference was lost in its shade.

The result of this mystery was a brilliant pleasure party, which took place on the following Sunday, the four young men inviting the four young girls.

III

FOUR TO FOUR

IT is difficult to picture to one's self, at this day, a country party of students and grisettes as it was forty-five years ago. Paris has no longer the same environs; the aspect of what we might call circum-Parisian life has completely changed in half a century; in place of the rude one-horse chaise we have now the railroad car; in place of the pinnace we have now the steamboat; we say Fécamp to-day, as we then said St. Cloud. The Paris of 1862 is a city which has France for its suburbs.

The four couples scrupulously accomplished all the country follies then possible. It was in the beginning of the holidays and a warm, clear summer's day. The night before, Favorite, the only one who knew how to write, had written to Tholomyès in the name of the four: "It is lucky to go out early." For this reason they rose at five

o'clock in the morning. Then they went to St. Cloud by the coach, looked at the dry cascade and exclaimed: "How beautiful it must be when there is any water!" breakfasted at the *Tête Noire,* which Castaing had not yet passed, amused themselves with a game of rings at the quincunx of the great basin, ascended to Diogenes' lantern, played roulette with macaroons on the Sèvres bridge, gathered bouquets at Puteaux, bought reed-pipes at Neuilly, ate apple-puffs everywhere, and were perfectly happy.

The young girls rattled and chattered like uncaged warblers. They were delirious with joy. Now and then they would playfully box the ears of the young men. Intoxication of the morning of life! Adorable years! The wing of the dragon-fly trembles! Oh, ye, whoever you may be, have you memories of the past? Have you walked in the brushwood, thrusting aside the branches for the charming head behind you? Have you glided laughingly down some slope wet with rain, with the woman of your love, who held you back by the hand, exclaiming: "Oh, my new boots! what a condition they are in!"

Let us hasten to say that that joyous annoyance, a shower, was wanting to this good-natured company, although Favorite had said, on setting out, with a magisterial and maternal air: "The snails are crawling in the paths. A sign of rain, children."

All four were ravishingly beautiful. A good old classic poet, then in renown, a good man who had an Eléanore, the Chevalier de Labouïsse, who was walking that day under the chestnut-trees of St. Cloud, saw them pass about ten o'clock in the morning and exclaimed, thinking of the graces: "There is one too many!" Favorite, the friend of Blacheville, the old one of twenty-three, ran forward under the broad, green branches, leaped across ditches, madly sprung over bushes and took the lead in the gayety with the verve of a young fawn. Zéphine and Dahlia, whom chance had endowed with a kind of beauty that was heightened and perfected by contrast, kept together through the instinct of coquetry still more than through friendship, and, leaning on each other, affected English attitudes; the first *keepsakes* had just appeared, melancholy was in vogue for women, as Byronism was afterward for men, and the locks of the tender sex were

beginning to fall disheveled. Zéphine and Dahlia wore their hair in rolls; Listolier and Fameuil, engaged in a discussion on their professors, explained to Fantine the difference between M. Delvincourt and M. Blondeau.

Blacheville seemed to have been created expressly to to carry Favorite's dead-leaf colored shawl upon his arm on Sunday.

Tholomyès followed. He presided over the group. He was excessively gay, but one felt the governing power in him. There was dictatorship in his joviality; his principal adornment was a pair of nankeen pantaloons, cut in the elephant-leg fashion, with under stockings of copper-colored braid; he had a huge rattan, worth 200 francs, in his hand, and, as he denied himself nothing, a strange thing called a cigar in his mouth. Nothing being sacred to him, he was smoking.

"This Tholomyès is astonishing," said the others, with veneration. "What pantaloons! what energy!"

As to Fantine, she was joy itself. Her splendid teeth had evidently been endowed by God with one function—that of laughing. She carried in her hand, rather than on her head, her little hat of sewed straw, with long, white strings. Her thick blond tresses, inclined to wave and easily escaping from their confinement, obliging her to fasten them continually, seemed designed for the flight of Galatea under the willows. Her rosy lips babbled with enchantment. The corners of her mouth, turned up voluptuously like the antique masks of Erigone, seemed to encourage audacity; but her long, shadowy eyelashes were cast discreetly down toward the lower part of her face as if to check its festive tendencies. Her whole toilet was indescribably harmonious and enchanting. She wore a dress of mauve barege, little reddish-brown buskins, the strings of which were crossed over her fine, white, open-worked stockings, and that species of spencer, invented at Marseilles, the name of which, *canezou,* a corruption of the words *quinze août* in the Canebière dialect, signifies fine weather, warmth, and noon. The three others, less timid as we have said, wore low-necked dresses, which, in summer, beneath bonnets covered with flowers, are full of grace and allurement; but by the side of this daring toilet the canezou of the blond Fantine. with its transparencies

indiscretions, and concealments, at once hiding and disclosing, seemed a provoking godsend of decency; and the famous court of love, presided over by the Viscountess de Cette, with the sea-green eyes, would probably have given the prize for coquetry to this canezou which had entered the lists for that of modesty. The simplest is sometimes the wisest. So things go.

A brilliant face, delicate profile, eyes of a deep blue, heavy eyelashes, small arching feet, the wrists and ankles neatly incased, the white skin showing here and there the azure arborescence of the veins; a cheek small and fresh, a neck robust as that of Egean Juno, the nape firm and supple, shoulders modeled as if by Coustou, with a voluptuous dimple in the centre, just visible through the muslin; a gayety tempered with reverie, sculptured and exquisite —such was Fantine, and you divined beneath this dress and these ribbons a statue, and in this statue a soul.

Fantine was beautiful without being too conscious of it. Those rare dreamers, the mysterious priests of the beautiful, who silently compare all things with perfection, would have had a dim vision in this little work-woman through the transparency of Parisian grace, of the ancient sacred Euphony. This daughter of obscurity had race. She possessed both types of beauty—style and rhythm. Style is the force of the ideal, rhythm is its movement.

We have said that Fantine was joy; Fantine also was modesty.

For an observer who had studied her attentively would have found through all this intoxication of age, of season, and of love, an unconquerable expression of reserve and modesty. She was somewhat restrained. This chaste restraint is the shade which separates Psyche from Venus. Fantine had the long, white, slender fingers of the vestals that stir the ashes of the sacred fire with a golden rod. Although she would have refused nothing to Tholomyès, as might be seen but too well, her face, in repose, was in the highest degree maidenly; a kind of serious and almost austere dignity suddenly possessed it at times, and nothing could be more strange or disquieting than to see gayety vanished there so quickly, and reflection instantly succeed to delight. This sudden seriousness, sometimes strangely marked, resembled the disdain of a goddess.

Her forehead, nose, and chin presented that equilibrium of line, quite distinct from the equilibrium of proportion, which produces harmony of features; in the characteristic interval which separates the base of the nose from the upper lip, she had that almost imperceptible but charming fold, the mysterious sign of chastity, which enamored Barbarossa with a Diana, found in the excavations of Iconium.

Love is a fault—be it so. Fantine was innocence floating upon the surface of this fault.

IV

THOLOMYES IS SO MERRY THAT HE SINGS A SPANISH SONG

THAT day was sunshine from one end to the other. All nature seemed to be out on a holiday. The parterres of St. Cloud were balmy with perfumes; the breeze from the Seine gently waved the leaves; the boughs were gesticulating in the wind; the bees were pillaging the jasmine; a whole crew of butterflies had settled in the milfoil, clover, and wild oats. The august park of the King of France was invaded by a swarm of vagabonds—the birds.

The four joyous couples shone resplendently in concert with the sunshine, the flowers, the fields, and the trees.

And in this paradisiacal community, speaking, singing, running, dancing, chasing butterflies, gathering bindweed, wetting their open-worked stockings in the high grass, fresh, wild, but not wicked, stealing kisses from each other indiscriminately now and then, all except Fantine, who was shut up in her vague, dreary, severe resistance, and who was in love. "You always have the air of being out of sorts," said Favorite to her.

These are true pleasures. These passages in the lives of happy couples are a profound appeal to life and nature and call forth endearment and light from everything. There was once upon a time a fairy, who created meadows and trees expressly for lovers. Hence comes that eternal school among the groves for lovers, which is always opening, and which will last so long as there are thickets and pupils. Hence comes the popularity of spring among thinkers. The patrician and the knife-grinder, the duke

and peer, and the peasant, the men of the court, and the men of the town, as was said in olden times, all are subjects of this fairy. They laugh, they seek each other; the air seemed filled with a new brightness; what a transfiguration is it to love! Notary clerks are gods. And the little shrieks, the pursuits among the grass, the waists encircled by stealth, that jargon which is melody, that adoration which breaks forth in a syllable, those cherries snatched from one pair of lips by another—all kindle up and become transformed into celestial glories. Beautiful girls lavish their charms with sweet prodigality. We fancy that it will never end. Philosophers, poets, painters behold these ecstasies and know not what to make of them—so dazzling are they. The departure for Cythera! exclaims Watteau; Lancret, the painter of the commonalty, contemplates his *bourgeois* soaring in the sky; Diderot stretches out his arms to all these loves, and M. d'Urfé associates them with the Druids.

After breakfast the four couples went to see, in what was then called the king's square, a plant newly arrived from the Indies, the name of which escapes us at present, and which at this time was attracting all Paris to St. Cloud; it was a strange and beautiful shrub with a long stalk, the innumerable branches of which, fine as threads, tangled and leafless, were covered with millions of little white blossoms, which gave it the appearance of flowing hair powdered with flowers. There was always a crowd admiring it.

When they had viewed the shrub Tholomyès exclaimed: "I propose donkeys," and, making a bargain with a donkey-driver, they returned through Vanvres and Issy. At Issy they had an adventure. The park—Bien-National—owned at this time by the commissary Bourguin, was, by sheer good luck, open. They passed through the grating, visited the manikin anchorite in his grotto and tried the little, mysterious effects of the famous cabinet mirrors—a wanton trap, worthy of a satyr become a millionaire, or Turcaret metamorphosed into Priapus. They swung stoutly in the great swing, attached to the two chestnut trees, celebrated by the Abbé de Bernis. While swinging the girls, one after the other, and making folds of flying crinoline that Greuze would have found worth his

study, the Toulousian Tholomyès, who was something of a Spaniard—Toulouse is a cousin of Tolosa—sang, in a melancholy key, the old *gallega* song, probably inspired by some beautiful damsel swinging in the air between two trees:

"Sey de Badajoz,
Amor me llama,
Toda mi alma
Es en mi ojos
Porque ensenas
A tus piernas."

Fantine alone refused to swing.

"I do not like this sort of airs," murmured Favorite, rather sharply.

They left the donkeys for a new pleasure, crossed the Seine in a boat and walked from Passy to the Barrière de l'Etoile. They had been on their feet, it will be remembered, since five o'clock in the morning, but "Bah! there is no weariness on Sunday," said Favorite; on Sunday fatigue has a holiday. Toward three o'clock the four couples, wild with happiness, were running down to the Russian mountains, a singular edifice which then occupied the heights of Beaujon, and the serpentine line of which might have been perceived above the trees of the Champs Elysées.

From time to time Favorite exclaimed: "But the surprise? I want the surprise."

"Be patient," answered Tholomyès.

V

AT BOMBARDA'S

THE Russian mountains exhausted, they thought of dinner, and the happy eight, little wearied at last, stranded on Bombarda's, a branch establishment set up in the Champs Elysées by the celebrated restaurateur, Bombarda, whose sign was then seen on the Rue de Rivoli, near the Delorme arcade.

A large but plain apartment, with an alcove containing a bed at the bottom (the place was so full on Sunday that it was necessary to take up with this lodging-room);

two windows from which they could see, through the elms, the quay and the river; a magnificent August sunbeam glancing over the windows; two tables; one loaded with a triumphant mountain of bouquets, interspersed with hats and bonnets, while at the other the four couples were gathered round a joyous pile of plates, napkins, glasses, and bottles; jugs of beer and flasks of wine; little order on the table and some disorder under it.

Says Molière:

"Ils faisaient sous la table,
Un bruit, un trique-trac epouvantable." *

Here was where the pastoral, commenced at 5 o'clock in the morning, was to be found at 4.30 o'clock in the afternoon. The sun was declining and their appetite with it.

The Champs Elysées, full of sunshine and people, was nothing but glare and dust—the two elements of glory. The horses of Marly—those neighing marbles—were curveting in a golden cloud. Carriages were coming and going. A magnificent squadron of body-guards, with the trumpet at their head, were coming down the avenue of Neuilly; the white flag, faintly tinged with red by the setting sun, was floating over the dome of the Tuileries. The Place de la Concorde, then become Place Louis XV again, was overflowing with pleased promenaders. Many wore the silver fleur-de-lis suspended from the watered white ribbon, which in 1817 had not wholly disappeared from the buttonholes. Here and there, in the midst of groups of applauding spectators, circles of little girls gave to the winds a Bourbon doggerel rhyme intended to overwhelm the 100 days and the chorus of which ran:

"Rendez-nous notre Père de Gand,
Rendez-nous notre pere." †

Crowds of inhabitants of the faubourgs in their Sunday clothes, sometimes even decked with fleurs-de-lis like the citizens, were scattered over the great square and the Square Marigny, playing games and going round on

* "And under the table they beat
A fearful tattoo with their feet."

† "Give us back our *Père de Gand,*
Give us back our sire."

wooden horses; others were drinking; a few, printer apprentices, had on paper caps; their laughter resounded through the air. Everything was radiant. It was a time of undoubted peace and profound royal security; it was the time when a private and special report of Prefect of Police Anglès to the King on the faubourgs of Paris, ended with these lines: "Everything considered, sire, there is nothing to fear from these people. They are as careless and indolent as cats. The lower people of the provinces are restless, those of Paris are not so. They are all small men, sire, and it would take two of them, one upon the other, to make one of your grenadiers. There is nothing at all to fear on the side of the populace of the capital. It is remarkable that this part of the population has also decreased in stature during the last fifty years; and the people of the faubourgs of Paris are smaller than before the Revolution. They are not dangerous. In short, they are good canaille."

That a cat may become changed into a lion, prefects of police do not believe possible; nevertheless, it may be, and this is the miracle of the people of Paris. Besides, the cat, so despised by the Count Anglès, had the esteem of the republics of antiquity; it was the incarnation of liberty in their sight, and, as if to serve as a pendant to the wingless Minerva of the Piræus, there was in the public square at Corinth the bronze colossus of a cat. The simple police of the Restoration looked too hopefully on the people of Paris. They are by no means such good canaille as is believed. The Parisian is among Frenchmen what the Athenian was among Greeks. Nobody sleeps better than he, nobody is more frankly frivolous and idle than he, nobody seems to forget things more easily than he; but do not trust him, notwithstanding; he is apt at all sorts of nonchalance, but when there is glory to be gained he is wonderful in every species of fury. Give him a pike and he will play the 10th of August; give him a musket and you shall have an Austerlitz. He is the support of Napoleon, and the resource of Danton. Is France in question? he enlists; is liberty in question? he tears up the pavement. Beware! his hair rising with rage is epic; his blouse drapes itself into a chlamys about him. Take care! At the first corner Grenétat will make a Caudine Forks. When the tocsin

sounds the dweller in the faubourgs will grow; this little man will arise, his look will be terrible, his breath will become a tempest, and a blast will go forth from his poor, frail breast that might shake the wrinkles out of the Alps. Thanks to the men of the Paris faubourgs, the Revolution infused into armies conquers Europe. He sings, it is his joy. Proportion his song to his nature and you shall see! So long as he had the Carmagnole merely for his chorus, he overthrew only Louis XVI; let him sing the "Marseillaise" and he will deliver the world.

Writing this note in the margin of the Anglès report, we will return to our four couples. The dinner, as we have said, was over.

VI

A CHAPTER OF SELF-ADMIRATION

TABLE talk and lovers' talk equally elude the grasp; lovers' talk is clouds, table talk is smoke.

Fameuil and Dahlia hummed airs; Tholomyès drank, Zéphine laughed, Fantine smiled. Listolier blew a wooden trumpet that he had bought at St. Cloud. Favorite looked tenderly at Blacheville, and said: "Blacheville, I adore you."

This brought forth a question from Blacheville: "What would you do, Favorite, if I should leave you?"

"Me!" cried Favorite. "Oh! do not say that, even in sport! If you should leave me I would run after you. I would scratch you, I would pull your hair, I would throw water on you, I would have you arrested."

Blacheville smiled with the effeminate foppery of a man whose self-love is tickled. Favorite continued: "Yes! I would cry 'watch'! No! I would scream, for example, 'rascal'!"

Blacheville, in ecstasy, leaned back in the chair and closed both eyes with a satisfied air.

Dahlia, still eating, whispered to Favorite in the hubbub: "Are you really so fond of your Blacheville, then?"

"I detest him," answered Favorite, in the same tone, taking up her fork. "He is stingy; I am in love with the little fellow over the way from where I live. He is a nice young man; do you know him? Anybody can see

that he was born to be an actor! I love actors. As soon as he comes into the house, his mother cries out: 'Oh, dear! my peace is all gone. There, he is going to halloo! You will split my head'; just because he goes into the garret among the rats, into the dark corners, as high as he can go, and sings and declaims—and how do I know that they can hear him below! He gets 20 sous a day already by writing for a pettifogger. He is the son of an old chorister of Saint-Jacques du Haut-Pas! Oh, he is a nice young man! He is so fond of me that he said one day when he saw me making dough for pancakes: 'Ma'm'selle, make your gloves into fritters and I will eat them.' Nobody but artists can say things like these; I am on the high road to go crazy about this little fellow. It is all the same, I tell Blacheville that I adore him. How I lie! Oh, how I lie!"

Favorite paused, then continued: "Dahlia, you see I am melancholy. It has done nothing but rain all summer; the wind makes me nervous and freckles me. Blacheville is very mean; there are hardly any green peas in the market yet; people care for nothing but eating; I have the spleen, as the English say; butter is so dear! and, then, just think of it—it is horrible! We are dining in a room with a bed in it. I am disgusted with life."

VII

THE WISDOM OF THOLOMYES

MEANTIME, while some were singing, the rest were all noisily talking at the same time. There was a perfect uproar. Tholomyès interfered.

"Do not talk at random, nor too fast!" exclaimed he; "we must take time for reflection, if we would be brilliant. Too much improvisation leaves the mind stupidly void. Running beer gathers no foam. Gentlemen, no haste. Mingle dignity with festivity, eat with deliberation, feast slowly. Take your time. See the spring; if it hastens forward, it is ruined; that is, frozen. Excess of zeal kills peach and apricot trees. Excess of zeal kills the grace and joy of good dinners. No zeal, gentlemen! Grimrod de la Reynière is of Talleyrand's opinions."

"Tholomyès, let us alone," said Blacheville.

"Down with the tyrant!" cried Fameuil.

"Bombarda, Bombance, and Bamboche!" exclaimed Listolier.

"Sunday still exists," resumed Listolier.

"We are sober," added Fameuil.

"Tholomyès," said Blacheville, "behold my calmness (*mon calme*)."

"You are its marquis," replied Tholomyès.

This indifferent play on words had the effect of a stone thrown into a pool. The Marquis de Montcalm was a celebrated royalist of the time. All the frogs were silent.

"My friends!" exclaimed Tholomyès, in the tone of a man resuming his sway. "Collect yourselves. This pun, though it falls from heaven, should not be welcomed with too much wonder. Everything that falls in this wise is not necessarily worthy of enthusiasm and respect. The pun is the dropping of the soaring spirit. The jest falls, it matters not where. And the spirit, after freeing itself from the folly, plunges into the clouds. A white spot settling upon a rock does not prevent the condor from hovering above. Far be it from me to insult the pun! I honor it in proportion to its merits—no more. The most august, most sublime, and most charming in humanity, and perhaps out of humanity, have made plays on words. Jesus Christ made a pun on St. Peter, Moses on Isaac, Æschylus on Polynices, Cleopatra on Octavius. And mark that this pun of Cleopatra preceded the battle of Actium, and that without it no one would have remembered the city of Toryne, a Greek name signifying dipper. This conceded, I return to my exhortation. My brethren, I repeat, no zeal, no noise, no excess, even in witticisms, mirth, gayety, and plays on words. Listen to me; have the prudence of Amphiaraüs and the boldness of Cæsar. There must be a limit, even to rebuses; *Est modus in rebus.* There must be a limit even to dinners. You like apple-puffs, ladies; do not abuse them. There must be, even in puffs, good sense and art. Gluttony punishes the glutton, Gula punishes Gulax. Indigestion is charged by God with enforcing morality on the stomach. And remember this: each of our passions, even love, has a stomach that must not be overloaded. We must in everything write the word *finis*

in time; we must restrain ourselves, when it becomes urgent; we must draw the bolt on the appetite, play a fantasia on the violin, then break the strings with our own hands.

"The wise man is he who knows when and how to stop. Have some confidence in me. Because I have studied law a little, as my examinations prove, because I know the difference between the *question mue* and the *question pendante,* because I have written a Latin thesis on the method of torture in Rome at the time when Munatius Demens was quæstor of the parricide; because I am about to become a doctor, as it seems, it does not follow necessarily that I am a fool. I recommend to you moderation in all your desires. As sure as my name is Félix Tholomyès, I speak wisely. Happy is he, who, when the hour comes, takes a heroic resolve and abdicates like Sylla or Origenes."

Favorite listened with profound attention.

"Félix!" said she, "what a pretty word. I like this name. It is Latin. It means prosperous."

Tholomyès continued: "*Quirites,* gentlemen, *caballeros, mes amis,* would you feel no passion, dispense with the nuptial couch, and set love at defiance? Nothing is easier. Here is the recipe: Lemonade, overexercise, hard labor; tire yourselves out, draw logs, do not sleep, keep watch; gorge yourselves with nitrous drinks and ptisans of water-lilies; drink emulsions of poppies and agnuscastus; enliven this with the rigid diet; starve yourselves, and add cold baths, girdles of herbs, the application of a leaden plate, lotions of solutions of lead, and fomentations with vinegar and water."

"I prefer a woman," said Listolier.

"Woman!" resumed Tholomyès; "distrust the sex. Unhappy is he who surrenders himself to the changing heart of woman! Woman is perfidious and tortuous. She detests the serpent through rivalry of trade. The serpent is the shop across the way."

"Tholomyès," cried Blacheville, "you are drunk."

"The deuce I am!" said Tholomyès.

"Then be gay," resumed Blacheville.

"I agree," replied Tholomyès.

Then, filling his glass, he arose.

"Honor to wine! *Nunc te, Bacche, canam.* Pardon,

ladies, that is Spanish. And here is the proof, *señoras;* like wine-measure, like people. The arroba of Castile contains sixteen litres, the cantaro of Alicante twelve, the almuda of the Canaries twenty-five, the cuartin of the Beleares twenty-six, and the boot of Czar Peter thirty. Long live the Czar, who was great, and long live his boot, which was still greater! Ladies, a friendly counsel! deceive your neighbors if it seems good to you. The characteristic of love is to rove. Love is not made to cower and crouch, like an English housemaid, whose knees are calloused with scrubbing. Gentle love was made but to rove gayly! It has been said to err is human; I say to err is loving. Ladies, I idolize you all. Oh Zéphine, or Josephine, with face more than wrinkled, you would be charming if you were not cross. Yours is like a beautiful face, upon which some one has sat down by mistake. As to Favorite—oh, nymphs and muses!—one day as Blacheville was crossing the Rue Guerin-Boisseau, he saw a beautiful girl with white, well-gartered stockings, who was showing them. The prologue pleased him and Blacheville loved. She whom he loved was Favorite. Oh, Favorite! Thou hast Ionian lips. There was a Greek painter, Euphorion, who was surnamed painter of lips. This Greek alone would have been worthy to paint thy mouth. Listen! before thee, there was no creature worthy the name. Thou wert made to receive the apple, like Venus, or to eat it, like Eve. Beauty begins with thee. I have spoken of Eve; she was of thy creation. Thou deservest the patent for the invention of beautiful women. Oh, Favorite, I cease to thou you, for I pass from poetry to prose. You spoke just now of my name. It moved me; but, whatever we do, let us not trust to names, they may be deceitful. I am called Félix; I am not happy. Words are deceivers. Do not blindly accept the indications which they give. It would be a mistake to write to Liège for corks or to Pau for gloves. Miss Dahlia, in your place, I should call myself Rose. The flower should have fragrance, and women should have wit. I say nothing of Fantine; she is visionary, dreamy, pensive, sensitive; she is a phantom, with the form of a nymph and the modesty of a nun, who has strayed into the life of a grisette, but who takes refuge in illusions, and who sings and prays and

gazes at the sky without knowing clearly what she sees or what she does, and who, with eyes fixed on heaven, wanders in a garden among more birds than exist there. Oh, Fantine, know this; I, Tholomyès, am an illusion—but she does not even hear me—the fair daughter of chimeras. Nevertheless, everything on her is freshness, gentleness, youth, soft, matinal clearness. Oh, Fantine, worthy to be called Marguerite of Pearl, you are a jewel of the purest water. Ladies, a second counsel, do not marry; marriage is a graft; it may take well or ill. Shun the risk. But what do I say? I am wasting my words. Women are incurable on the subject of weddings, and all that we wise men can say will not hinder vest-makers and gaiter-binders from dreaming about husbands loaded with diamonds. Well, be it so; but, beauties, remember this; you eat too much sugar. You have but one fault, oh, women! it is that of nibbling sugar. Oh, consuming sex, the pretty, little white teeth adore sugar. Now, listen attentively! Sugar is a salt. Every salt is desiccating. Sugar is the most desiccating of all salts. It sucks up the liquids from the blood through the veins; thence comes the coagulation, then the solidification of the blood; thence tubercles in the lungs; thence death. And this is why diabetes borders on consumption. Crunch no sugar, therefore, and you shall live! I turn toward the men; gentlemen, make conquests. Rob each other without remorse of your beloved. Chassez and cross over. There are no friends in love. Wherever there is a pretty woman hostility is open. No quarter; war to the knife. A pretty woman is a *casus belli;* a pretty woman is a *flagrans delictum.* All the invasions of history have been determined by petticoats. Woman is the right of man. Romulus carried off the Sabine women; William carried off the Saxon women; Cæsar carried off the Roman women. The man who is not loved hovers like a vulture over the sweetheart of others; and, for my part, to all unfortunate widowers, I issue the sublime proclamation of Bonaparte to the army of Italy. 'Soldiers, you lack for everything. The enemy has everything.' "

Tholomyès checked himself.

"Take breath, Tholomyès," said Blacheville.

At the same time, Blacheville, aided by Listolier and

Fameuil, with an air of lamentation hummed one of those workshop songs, made up of the first words that came, rhyming richly and not at all, void of sense as the movement of the trees and the sound of the winds, and which are borne from the smoke of the pipes, and dissipate and take flight with it. This is the couplet by which the group replied to the harangue of Tholomyès:

"Les pères dindons donnerent
De l'argent à un agent
Pour que mons Clermont-Tonnerro
Fût fait pape à la Saint-Jean;
Mais Clermont ne put pas être
Fait pape, n'étant pas prêtre;
Alors leur agent rageant
Leur rapporta leur argent."

This was not likely to calm the inspiration of Tholomyès; he emptied his glass, filled it, and again began: "Down with wisdom! Forget all that I have said. Let us be neither prudes, nor prudent, nor prud'hommes. I drink to jollity; let us be jolly. Let us finish our course of study by folly and prating. Indigestion and the digest. Let Justinian be the male, and festivity the female. There is joy in the abysses. Behold, oh, creation! The world is a huge diamond! I am happy. The birds are marvelous. What a festivity everywhere! The nightingale is an Elleviou gratis. Summer, I salute thee. Oh, Luxembourg! Oh, Georgics of the Rue Madame, and the Allée de l'Observatoire! Oh, entranced dreamers! The pampas of America would delight me, if I had not the arcades of the Odéon. My soul goes out toward virgin forests and savannas. Everything is beautiful; the flies hum in the sunbeams; the humming-birds whizz in the sunshine. Kiss me, Fantine!"

And, by mistake, he kissed Favorite.

VIII

DEATH OF A HORSE

"THE dinners are better at Edon's than at Bombarda's," exclaimed Zéphine.

"I like Bombarda better than Edon," said Blacheville. "There is more luxury. It is more Asiatic. See the lower hall. There are mirrors (*glaces*) on the walls."

"I prefer ices (*glaces*) on my plate," said Favorite.

Blacheville persisted.

"Look at the knives. The handles are silver at Bombarda's, and bone at Edon's. Now, silver is more precious than bone."

"Except when it is on the chin," observed Tholomyès.

He looked out this moment at the dome of the Invalides, which was visible from Bombarda's windows.

There was a pause.

"Tholomyès," cried Fameuil, "Listolier and I have just had a discussion."

"A discussion is good," replied Tholomyès, "a quarrel is better."

"We were discussing philosophy."

"I have no objection."

"Which do you prefer, Descartes or Spinoza?"

"Désaugiers," said Tholomyès.

This decision rendered, he drank, and resumed: "I consent to live. All is not over on earth, since we can yet reason falsely. I render thanks for this to the immortal gods. We lie, but we laugh. We affirm, but we doubt. The unexpected shoots forth from a syllogism. It is fine. There are men still on earth who know how to open and shut pleasantly the surprise boxes of paradox. Know, ladies, that this wine you are drinking so calmly is Madeira from the vineyard of Coural das Freiras, which is 317 fathoms above the level of the sea. Attention while you drink! 317 fathoms! and M. Bombarda, this magnificent restaurateur, gives you these 317 fathoms for four francs fifty centimes."

Fameuil interrupted again: "Tholomyès, your opinions are law. Who is your favorite author?"

"Ber—"

"Quin?"

"No. Choux."

And Tholomyès continued: "Honor to Bombarda! he would equal Munophis of Elephanta if he would procure me an almée and Thygelion of Chæronea, if he could bring me a hetaïra! for, oh, ladies, there were Bombardas in Greece and Egypt; this Apuleius teaches us. Alas! always the same thing and nothing new. Nothing more unpublished in the creation of the Creator. *'Nil sub sole*

novum,' says Solomon; '*Amor omnibus idem*,' says Virgil; and Carabine mounts with Carabin in the galliot at St. Cloud, as Aspasia embarked with Pericles on the fleet of Samos. A last word. Do you know who this Aspasia was, ladies? Although she lived in a time when women had not yet a soul, she was a soul; a soul of a rose and purple shade, more glowing than fire, fresher than the dawn. Aspasia was a being who touched the two extremes of woman, the prostitute goddess. She was Socrates, plus Manon Lescaut. Aspasia was created in case Prometheus might need a wanton."

Tholomyès, now that he was started, would have been stopped with difficulty had not a horse fallen down at this moment on the quay. The shock stopped both the cart and the orator. It was an old, meagre mare, worthy of the knacker, harnessed to a very heavy cart. On reaching Bombarda's, the beast, worn and exhausted, had refused to go further. This incident attracted a crowd. Scarcely had the carman, swearing and indignant, had time to utter with fitting energy the decisive word, *mâtin*, backed by a terrible stroke of the whip, when the hack fell to rise no more. At the hubbub of the passers-by, the merry auditors of Tholomyès turned their heads, and Tholomyès profited by it to close his address by this melancholy strophe:

> Elle était de ce monde où coucous et carrosses
> Out le même destin;
> Et, rosse, elle a vécu ce que vivent les rosses,
> L'espace d'un matin!

"Poor horse!" sighed Fantine.

Dahlia exclaimed: "Here is Fantine pitying horses! Was there ever anything so absurd?"

At this moment Favorite, crossing her arms and turning round her head, looked fixedly at Tholomyès, and said: "Come, the surprise?"

"Precisely. The moment has come," replied Tholomyès. "Gentlemen, the hour has come for surprising these ladies. Ladies, wait for us a moment."

"It begins with a kiss," said Blacheville.

"On the forehead," added Tholomyès.

Each one gravely placed a kiss on the forehead of his

mistress; after which they directed their steps toward the door, all four in file, laying their fingers on their lips.

Favorite clapped her hands as they went out.

"It is amusing already," said she.

"Do not be too long," murmured Fantine. "We are waiting for you."

IX

JOYOUS END OF JOY

THE girls, left alone, leaned their elbows on the window sills in couples and chattered together, bending their heads and speaking from one window to the other.

They saw the young men go out of Bombarda's arm in arm; they turned round, made signals to them laughingly, then disappeared in the dusty Sunday crowd which takes possession of the Champs Elysées once a week.

"Do not be long," cried Fantine.

"What are they going to bring us?" said Zéphine.

"Surely something pretty," said Dahlia.

"I hope it will be gold," resumed Favorite.

They were soon distracted by the stir on the water's edge, which they distinguished through the branches of the tall trees, and which diverted them greatly. It was the hour for the departure of the mails and diligences. Almost all the stage-coaches to the south and west passed at that time by the Champs Elysées. The greater part followed the quay and went out through the Barrière Passy. Every minute some huge vehicle, painted yellow and black, heavily loaded, noisily harnessed, distorted with mails, awnings, and valises, full of heads which were constantly disappearing, grinding the curbstones, turning the pavements into flints, rushed through the crowd, throwing out sparks like a forge, with dust for smoke, and an air of fury. This hubbub delighted the young girls. Favorite exclaimed: "What an uproar; one would say that heaps of chains were taking flight."

It so happened that one of these vehicles, which could be distinguished with difficulty through the obscurity of the elms, stopped for a moment, then set out again on a gallop. This surprised Fantine.

"It is strange," said she. "I thought the diligences never stopped."

Favorite shrugged her shoulders: "This Fantine is surprising; I look at her with curiosity. She wonders at the most simple things. Suppose that I am a traveler and say to the diligence: 'I am going on; you can take me up on the quay in passing.' The diligence passes, sees me, stops and takes me up. This happens every day. You know nothing of life, my dear."

Some time passed in this manner. Suddenly Favorite started as if from sleep.

"Well!" said she, "and the surprise?"

"Yes," returned Dahlia, "the famous surprise."

"They are very long," said Fantine.

As Fantine finished the sigh, the boy who had waited at dinner entered. He had in his hand something that looked like a letter.

"What is that?" asked Favorite.

"It is a paper that the gentlemen left for these ladies," he replied.

"Why did you not bring it at once?"

"Because the gentlemen ordered me not to give it to the ladies before an hour," returned the boy.

Favorite snatched the paper from his hands. It was really a letter.

"Stop!" said she. "There is no address; but see what is written on it:

" 'THIS IS THE SURPRISE.' "

She hastily unsealed the letter, opened it and read (she knew how to read):

Oh, our lovers!

Know that we have parents. Parents—you scarcely know the meaning of the word; they are what are called fathers and mothers in the civil code—simple, but honest. Now these parents bemoan us, these old men claim us, these good men and women call us prodigal sons, desire our return and offer to kill for us the fatted calf. We obey them, being virtuous. At the moment when you read this five mettlesome horses will be bearing us back to our papas and mammas. We are pitching our camps, as Bossuet says. We are going—we are gone. We fly in the arms of Laffitte and on the wings of Caillard. The Toulouse diligence snatches us from the abyss, and you are this abyss, our beautiful darlings! We are returning to society, to duty, and order, on

a full trot, at the rate of three leagues an hour. It is necessary to the country that we become, like everybody else, prefects, fathers of families, rural guards, and councilors of state. Venerate us. We sacrifice ourselves. Mourn for us rapidly and replace us speedily. If this letter rends you, rend it in turn. Adieu!

For nearly two years we have made you happy. Bear us no ill-will for it.

[Signed] BLACHEVILLE,
FAMEUIL,
LISTOLIER,
FELIX THOLOMYES.

P. S.—The dinner is paid for.

The four girls gazed at each other.

Favorite was the first to break the silence.

"Well!" said she, "it is a good farce all the same."

"It is very droll," said Zéphine.

"It must have been Blacheville that had the idea," resumed Favorite. "This makes me in love with him. Soon loved, soon gone. That is the story."

"No," said Dahlia, "it is an idea of Tholomyès's. This is clear."

"In that case," returned Favorite, "down with Blacheville, and long live Tholomyès!"

"Long live Tholomyès!" cried Dahlia and Zéphine.

And they burst into laughter.

Fantine laughed like the rest.

An hour afterward, when she had re-entered her chamber, she wept. It was her first love, as we have said; she had given herself to this Tholomyès as to a husband, and the poor girl had a child.

BOOK FOURTH—TO INTRUST IS SOMETIMES TO ABANDON

I

ONE MOTHER MEETS ANOTHER

THERE was, during the first quarter of the present century, at Montfermiel, near Paris, a sort of chophouse. It is not there now. It was kept by a man and his wife, named Thenardier, and was situated in the Lane

Boulanger. Above the door, nailed flat against the wall, was a board, upon which something was painted that looked like a man carrying on his back another man wearing the heavy epaulettes of a general, gilt, and with large silver stars; red blotches typified blood; the remainder of the picture was smoke, and probably represented a battle. Beneath was the inscription:

"To the Sergeant of Waterloo"

Nothing is commoner than a cart or wagon before the door of an inn; nevertheless the vehicle, or, more properly speaking, the fragment of a vehicle, which obstructed the street in front of the Sergeant of Waterloo one evening in the spring of 1815, certainly would have attracted, by its bulk, the attention of any painter who might have been passing.

It was the fore-carriage of one of those drays for carrying heavy articles used in wooded countries for transporting joists and trunks of trees; it consisted of a massive iron axletree with a pivot to which a heavy pole was attached, and which was supported by two enormous wheels. As a whole it was squat, crushing, and misshapen; it might have been fancied a gigantic gun-carriage.

The roads had covered the wheels, felloes, limbs, axle, and the pole, with a coating of hideous yellow-hued mud, similar in tint to that with which cathedrals are sometimes decorated. The wood had disappeared beneath mud; and the iron beneath rust.

Under the axletree hung festooned a huge chain fit for a Goliath of the galleys.

This chain recalled, not the beams which it was used to carry, but the mastodons and mammoths which it might have harnessed; it reminded one of the galleys, but of cyclopean and superhuman galleys, and seemed as if unriveted from some monster. With it Homer could have bound Polyphemus, or Shakespeare Caliban.

Why was this vehicle in this place in the street, one may ask? First, to obstruct the lane and then to complete its work of rust. There is in the old social order a host of institutions which we find like this across our path in the full light of day, and which present no other reasons for being there.

The middle of the chain was hanging quite near the ground under the axle; and upon the bend, as on a swinging rope, two little girls were seated that evening in exquisite grouping, the smaller, eighteen months old, in the lap of the larger, who was two years and six months old.

A handkerchief carefully knotted kept them from falling. A mother, looking upon this frightful chain, had said: "Ah! there is a plaything for my children!"

The radiant children, picturesquely and tastefully decked, might be fancied two roses twining the rusty iron with their triumphantly sparkling eyes and their blooming, laughing faces. One was a rosy blonde, the other a brunette; their artless faces were two ravishing surprises: the perfume that was shed upon the air by a flowering shrub near by seemed their own out-breathings; the smaller one was showing her pretty little body with the chaste indecency of babyhood. Above and around these delicate heads, molded in happiness and bathed in light, the gigantic carriage, black with rust and almost frightful with its entangled curves and abrupt angles, arched like the mouth of a cavern.

The mother, a woman whose appearance was rather forbidding, but touching at this moment, was seated on the sill of the inn swinging the two children by a long string, while she brooded them with her eyes for fear of accident with that animal but heavenly expression peculiar to maternity. At each vibration the hideous links uttered a creaking noise like an angry cry; the little ones were in ecstasies, the setting sun mingled in the joy and nothing could be more charming than this caprice of chance which made a Titan's chain a swing for cherubim.

While rocking the babes the mother sang with a voice out of tune a then popular song:

"Il le faut, disait un guerrier."

Her song and watching her children prevented her hearing and seeing what was passing in the street.

Some one, however, had approached her as she was beginning the first couplet of the song, and suddenly she heard a voice say quite near her ear: "You have two pretty children there, madame."

"A la belle et tendre Imogine,"

answered the mother, continuing her song; then she turned her head.

A woman was before her at a little distance; she also had a child, which she bore in her arms.

She was carrying in addition a large carpet-bag, which seemed heavy.

This woman's child was one of the divinest beings that can be imagined, a little girl of two or three years. She might have entered the lists with the other little ones for coquetry of attire; she wore a head-dress of fine linen; ribbons at her shoulders and Valenciennes lace on her cap. The folds of her skirt were raised enough to show her plump, fine white leg; she was charmingly rosy and healthful. The pretty little creature gave one a desire to bite her cherry cheeks. We can say nothing of her eyes except that they must have been very large and were fringed with superb lashes. She was asleep.

She was sleeping in the absolutely confiding slumber peculiar to her age. Mothers' arms are made of tenderness, and sweet sleep blesses the child who lies therein.

As to the mother, she seemed poor and sad; she had the appearance of a working woman who is seeking to return to the life of a peasant. She was young—and pretty. It was possible, but in that garb beauty could not be displayed. Her hair, one blond mesh of which had fallen, seemed very thick, but it was severely fastened up beneath an ugly, close, narrow nun's head-dress, tied under the chin. Laughing shows fine teeth when one has them, but she did not laugh. Her eyes seemed not to have been tearless for a long time. She was pale and looked very weary and somewhat sick. She gazed upon her child sleeping in her arms with that peculiar look which only a mother possesses who nurses her own child. Her form was clumsily masked by a large blue handkerchief folded across her bosom. Her hands were tanned and spotted with freckles, the forefinger hardened and pricked with the needle; she wore a coarse brown delaine mantle, a calico dress and large, heavy shoes. It was Fantine.

Yes, Fantine. Hard to recognize, yet on looking attentively you saw that she still retained her beauty. A sad line, such as is formed by irony, had marked her right cheek. As to her toilet—that airy toilet of muslin and

ribbons which seemed as if made of gayety, folly, and music, full of bawbles and perfumed with lilacs—that had vanished like the beautiful sparkling hoar-frost which we take for diamonds in the sun; they melt and leave the branch dreary and black.

Ten months had slipped away since "the good farce."

What had passed during these ten months? We can guess.

After recklessness, trouble. Fantine had lost sight of Favorite, Zéphine, and Dahlia, the tie, broken on the part of the men, was unloosened on the part of the women; they would have been astonished if any one had said a fortnight afterward they were friends; they had no longer cause to be so. Fantine was left alone. The father of her child gone—alas! such partings are irrevocable—she found herself absolutely isolated with the habit of labor lost and the taste for pleasure acquired. Led by her liaison with Tholomyès to disdain the small business that she knew how to do, she had neglected her opportunities; they were all gone. No resource. Fantine could scarcely read and did not know how to write. She had only been taught in childhood how to sign her name. She had a letter written by a public letter-writer to Tholomyès, then a second, then a third. Tholomyès had replied to none of them. One day Fantine heard some old women saying as they saw her child: "Do people ever take such children to heart? They only shrug their shoulders at such children!" Then she thought of Tholomyès, who shrugged his shoulders at his child and who did not take this innocent child to heart, and her heart became dark in the place that was his. What should she do? She had no one to ask. She had committed a fault; but in the depths of her nature we know dwelt modesty and virtue. She had a vague feeling that she was on the eve of falling into distress, of slipping into the street. She must have courage; she had it and bore up bravely. The idea occurred to her of returning to her native village, M—— sur M——; there perhaps some one would know her and give her work. Yes, but she must hide her fault. And she had a confused glimpse of the possible necessity of a separation still more painful than the first. Her heart ached, but she took her resolution. It will be seen that Fantine possessed the stern courage

of life. She had already valiantly renounced her finery, was draped in calico, and had put all her silks, gewgaws, her ribbons and laces on her daughter—the only vanity that remained, and that a holy one. She sold all she had, which gave her 200 francs; when her little debts were paid she had but 80 francs left. At twenty-two years of age, on a fine spring morning, she left Paris, carrying her child on her back. He who had seen the two passing must have pitied them. The woman had nothing in the world but this child, and this child had nothing in the world but this woman. Fantine had nursed her child; that had weakened her chest somewhat, and she coughed slightly.

We shall have no further need to speak of M. Félix Tholomyès. We will only say here that twenty years later, under King Louis Philippe, he was a fat provincial attorney, rich and influential, a wise elector and rigid juryman; always, however, a man of pleasure.

Toward noon, after having for the sake of rest traveled from time to time at a cost of three or four sous a league in what they called then the Petites Voitures of the environs of Paris, Fantine reached Montfermiel and stood in Boulanger Lane.

As she was passing by the Thenardier chop-house the two little children sitting in delight on their monstrous swing had a sort of dazzling effect upon her, and she paused before this joyous vision.

There are charms. These two little girls were one for this mother.

She beheld them with emotion. The presence of angels is a herald of paradise. She thought she saw above this inn the mysterious "HERE" of Providence. These children were evidently happy; she gazed upon them, she admired them, so much affected that at the moment when the mother was taking breath between the verses of her song she could not help saying what we have been reading.

"You have two pretty children, there, madame."

The most ferocious animals are disarmed by caresses to their young.

The mother raised her head and thanked her, and made the stranger sit down on the stone step, she herself being on the doorsill; the two women began to talk together.

"My name is Mme. Thenardier," said the mother of the two girls; "we keep this inn."

Then going on with her song she sang between her teeth:

"Il le faut, je suis chevalier,
Et je pars pour la Palestine."

This Mme. Thenardier was a red-haired, brawny, angular woman, of the soldier's wife type in all its horror; and, singular enough, she had a lolling air which she had gained from novel-reading. She was a masculine lackadaisicalness. Old romances impressed on the imaginations of mistresses of chop-houses have such effects. She was still young, scarcely thirty years old. If this woman, who sat stooping, had been upright, perhaps her towering form and her broad shoulders, those of a movable colossus fit for a market-woman, would have dismayed the traveler, disturbed her confidence, and prevented what we have to relate. A person seated instead of standing; fate hangs on such a thread as that.

The traveler told her story a little modified.

She said she was a working woman and her husband was dead. Not being able to procure work in Paris she was going in search of it elsewhere, in her own province; that she had left Paris that morning on foot; that carrying her child she had become tired, and meeting the Villemoble stage had got in; that from Villemoble she had come on foot to Montfermeil; that the child had walked a little, not much, she was so young; that she was compelled to carry her and the jewel had fallen asleep.

And at these words she gave her daughter a passionate kiss which wakened her. The child opened its large blue eyes, like its mother's, and saw—what? Nothing, everything, with that serious and sometimes severe air of little children, which is one of the mysteries of their shining innocence before our shadowy virtues. One would say they felt themselves to be angels and knew us to be human. Then the child began to laugh, and, although the mother restrained her, slipped to the ground with the indomitable energy of a little one that wants to run about. All at once she perceived the two others in their swing, stopped short, and put out her tongue in token of admiration.

Mother Thenardier untied the children and took them from the swing, saying: "Play together, all three of you."

At that age acquaintance is easy, and in a moment the little Thenardiers were playing with the new-comer, making holes in the ground to their intense delight.

This new-comer was very sprightly; the goodness of the mother is written in the gayety of the child; she had taken a splinter of wood, which she used as a spade and was stoutly digging a hole fit for a fly. The grave-digger's work is charming when done by a child.

The two women continued to chat.

"What do you call your brat?"

"Cosette."

For Cosette read Euphrasie. The name of the little one was Euphrasie. But the mother had made Cosette out of it, by that sweet and charming instinct of mothers and of the people, who change Jósefa into Pepita and Françoise into Sillette. That is a kind of derivation which deranges and disconcerts all the science of etymologists. We knew a grandmother who succeeded in making from Theodore, Gnon.

"How old is she?"

"She is going on three years."

"The age of my oldest."

The three girls were grouped in an attitude of deep anxiety and bliss; a great event had occurred; a large worm had come out of the ground; they were afraid of it, and yet in ecstasies over it.

Their bright foreheads touched each other; three heads in one halo of glory.

"Children," exclaimed the Thenardier mother; "how soon they know one another. See them! One would swear they were three sisters."

These words were the spark which the other woman was probably awaiting. She seized the hand of Mme. Thenardier and said: "Will you keep my child for me?"

Mme. Thenardier made a motion of surprise, which was neither consent nor refusal.

Cosette's mother continued: "You see I can not take my child into the country. Work forbids it. With a child I could not find a place there; they are so absurd in that district. It is God who has led me before your inn. The

sight of your little ones, so pretty and clean and happy, has overwhelmed me. I said: 'There is a good mother; they will be like three sisters and then it will not be long before I come back.' Will you keep my child for me?"

"I must think it over," said Thenardier.

"I will give six francs a month."

Here a man's voice was heard from within: "Not less than seven francs and six months paid in advance."

"Six times seven are forty-two," said Mme. Thenardier.

"I will give it," said the mother.

"And fifteen francs extra for the first expenses," added the man.

"That's fifty-seven francs," said Mme. Thenardier, and in the midst of her reckoning, she sang indistinctly:

"Il le faut, disait un guerrier."

"I will give it," said the mother; "I have eighty francs. That will leave me enough to go into the country if I walk. I will earn some money there, and, as soon as I have, I will come for my little love."

The man's voice returned: "Has the child a wardrobe?"

"That is my husband," said Mme. Thenardier.

"Certainly she has, the poor darling. I knew it was your husband. And a fine wardrobe it is, too, an extravagant wardrobe, everything in dozens and silk dresses like a lady. They are there in my carpet-bag."

"You must leave that here," put in the man's voice.

"Of course I shall give it to you," said the mother; "it would be strange if I should leave my child naked."

The face of the master appeared.

"It is all right," said he.

The bargain was concluded. The mother passed the night at the inn, gave her money and left her child, fastened again her carpet-bag, diminished by her child's wardrobe, and very light now, and set off next morning, expecting soon to return. These partings are arranged tranquilly, but they are full of despair.

The neighbor of the Thenardiers met this mother on her way, and came in, saying: "I have just met a woman in the street who was crying as if her heart would break."

When Cosette's mother had gone, the man said to his wife: "That will do me for my note of 110 francs which

falls due to-morrow; I was 50 francs short. Do you know I should have had a sheriff and a protest? You have proved a good mouse-trap with your little ones."

"Without knowing it," said the woman.

II

FIRST SKETCH OF TWO EQUIVOCAL FACES

THE captured mouse was a very puny one, but the cat exulted even over a lean mouse.

What were the Thenardiers?

We will say but a word just here; by and by the sketch shall be completed.

They belonged to that bastard class formed of low people who have risen, and intelligent people who have fallen, which lies between the classes called middle and lower, and which unites some of the faults of the latter with nearly all the vices of the former, without possessing the generous impulses of the workman or the respectability of the bourgeois.

They were of those dwarfish natures, which, if perchance heated by some sullen fire, easily become monstrous. The woman was at heart a brute; the man a blackguard; both in the highest degree capable of that hideous species of progress which can be made toward evil. There are souls which, crab-like, crawl continually toward darkness, going back in life rather than advancing in it; using what experience they have to increase their deformity; growing worse without ceasing, and becoming steeped more and more thoroughly in an intensifying wickedness. Such souls were this man and this woman.

The man, especially, would have been a puzzle to a physiognomist. We have only to look at some men to distrust them, for we feel the darkness of their souls in two ways. They are restless as to what is behind them, and threatening as to what is before them. They are full of mystery. We can no more answer for what they have done than for what they will do. The shadow in their looks denounces them. If we hear them utter a word, or see them make a gesture, we catch glimpses of guilty secrets in their past and dark mysteries in their future.

This Thenardier, if we may believe him, had been a soldier, a sergeant, he said; he probably had made the campaign of 1815, and had even borne himself bravely according to all that appeared. We shall see hereafter in what his bravery consisted. The sign of his inn was an allusion to one of his feats of arms. He had painted it himself, for he knew how to do a little of everything—badly.

It was the time when the antique romance—which after having been "Clelié" sank to "Lodoïska," always noble, but becoming more and more vulgar; falling from Mdlle. de Scuderi to Mme. Bournon-Malarme, and from Mme. de Lafayette to Mme. Barthélemy-Hadot—was firing the loving souls of the portresses of Paris and making some ravages even in the suburbs. Mme. Thenardier was just intelligent enough to read that sort of book. She fed on them. She drowned what little brain she had in them; and that had given her, while she was yet young, and even in later life, a kind of pensive attitude toward her husband, a knave of some calibre; a ruffian, educated almost to the extent of grammar; at once coarse and fine, but, so far as sentimentalism was concerned, reading Pigault Lebrun, and in "all which related to the sex," as he said in his jargon, a correct dolt without adulteration. His wife was twelve or fifteen years younger than he. At a later period, when the hair of the romantic weepers began to grow gray, when Mégère parted company with Pamela, Mme. Thenardier was only a gross, bad woman who had relished stupid novels. Now, people do not read stupidities with impunity. The result was that her eldest child was named Eponine, and the youngest, who had just escaped being called Gulnare, owed to some happy diversion made by a novel of Ducray Duminil, the mitigation of Azelma.

However, let us say, by the way, all things are not ridiculous and superficial in this singular epoch to which we allude, and which might be termed the anarchy of baptismal names. Besides this romantic element which we have noticed, there is the social symptom. To-day it is not infrequent to see herdsboys named Arthur, Alfred, and Alphonse; and viscounts—if there be any remaining—named Thomas, Peter, or James. This change, which places the "elegant" name on the plebeian and the country appellation on the aristocrat, is only an eddy in the tide

of equality. The irresistible penetration of a new inspiration is there as well as in everything else; beneath this apparent discordance there is a reality grand and deep—the French Revolution.

III

THE LARK

TO be wicked does not ensure prosperity—for the inn did not succeed well.

Thanks to Fantine's 57 francs, Thenardier had been able to avoid a protest and to honor his signature. The next month they were still in need of money, and the woman carried Cosette's wardrobe to Paris and pawned it for 60 francs. When this sum was spent the Thenardiers began to look upon the little girl as a child which they sheltered for charity, and treated her as such. Her clothes being gone, they dressed her in the cast-off garments of the little Thenardiers—that is, in rags. They fed her on the odds and ends, a little better than the dog, and a little worse than the cat. The dog and cat were her messmates, Cosette ate with them under the table in a wooden dish like theirs.

Her mother, as we shall see hereafter, who had found a place at M—— sur M——, wrote, or rather had some one write for her, every month, inquiring for news of her child. The Thenardiers replied, invariably: "Cosette is doing wonderfully well."

The six months passed away; the mother sent seven francs for the seventh month and continued to send this sum regularly month after month. The year was not ended before Thenardier said: "A pretty price that is. What does she expect us to do for her seven francs?" And he wrote demanding twelve francs. The mother, whom he persuaded that her child was happy and doing well, assented, and forwarded the twelve francs.

There are certain natures which can not have love on one side without hatred on the other. This Thenardier mother passionately loved her little ones; this made her detest the young stranger. It is sad to think that a mother's love can have such a dark side. Little as was the place Cosette occupied in the house, it seemed to her that this little was

taken from her children and that the little one lessened the air hers breathed. This woman, like many women of her kind, had a certain amount of caresses and blows and hard words to dispense each day. If she had not had Cosette it is certain that her daughters, idolized as they were, would have received all, but the little stranger did them the service to attract the blows to herself; her children had only the caresses. Cosette could not stir that she did not draw down upon herself a hailstorm of undeserved and severe chastisements. A weak, soft little one who knew nothing of this world or of God, continually ill-treated, scolded, punished, beaten, she saw beside her two other young things like herself, who lived in a halo of glory.

The woman was unkind to Cosette; Eponine and Azelma were unkind also. Children at that age are only copies of the mother; the size is reduced, that is all.

A year passed and then another.

People used to say in the village: "What good people these Thenardiers are! They are not rich, and yet they bring up a poor child that has been left with them."

They thought Cosette was forgotten by her mother.

Meantime Thenardier, having learned in some obscure way that the child was probably illegitimate and that its mother could not acknowledge it, demanded fifteen francs a month, saying "that the 'creature' was growing and eating," and threatening to send her away. "She won't humbug me," he exclaimed; "I will confound her with the brat in the midst of her concealment. I must have more money." The mother paid the fifteen francs.

From year to year the child grew and her misery also.

So long as Cosette was very small she was the scapegoat of the two other children; as soon as she began to grow a little, that is to say, before she was five years old, she became the servant of the house.

Five years old! it will be said, that is improbable. Alas! it is true; social suffering begins at all ages. Have we not seen lately the trial of Dumollard, an orphan become a bandit, who, from the age of five, say the official documents, being alone in the world, "worked for his living and stole!"

Cosette was made to run errands, sweep the rooms, the yard, the street, wash the dishes, and even carry burdens.

The Thenardiers felt doubly authorized to treat her thus, as the mother, who still remained at M—— sur M——, began to be remiss in her payments. Some months remained due.

Had this mother returned to Montfermeil at the end of these three years she would not have known her child. Cosette, so fresh and pretty when she came to that house, was now thin and wan. She had a peculiar, restless air. Sly! said the Thenardiers.

Injustice had made her sullen and misery had made her ugly. Her fine eyes only remained to her, and they were painful to look at, for, large as they were, they seemed to increase her sadness.

It was a harrowing sight to see in the winter time the poor child, not yet six years old, shivering under the tatters of what was once a calico dress, sweeping the street before daylight with an enormous broom in her little red hands and tears in her large eyes.

In the place she was called "The Lark." People like figurative names, and were pleased thus to name this little being, not larger than a bird, trembling, frightened, and shivering, awake every morning first of all in the house and the village, always in the street or the fields before dawn.

Only the poor lark never sang.

BOOK FIFTH—THE DESCENT

I

HISTORY OF AN IMPROVEMENT IN JET-WORK

WHAT had become of this mother, in the meanwhile, who, according to the people of Montfermeil, seemed to have abandoned her child? Where was she? What was she doing?

After leaving her little Cosette with the Thenardiers, she went on her way and arrived at M—— sur M——.

This, it will be remembered, was in 1818.

Fantine had left the province some twelve years before, and M—— sur M—— had greatly changed in appearance.

While Fantine had been slowly sinking deeper and deeper into misery her native village had been prosperous.

Within about two years there had been accomplished there one of those industrial changes which are the great events of small communities.

This circumstance is important, and we think it well to relate it, we might say to italicize it.

From time immemorial the special occupation of the inhabitants of M—— sur M—— had been the imitation of English jets and German black glass trinkets. The business had always been dull in consequence of the high price of the raw material, which reacted upon the manufacture. At the time of Fantine's return to M—— sur M—— an entire transformation had been effected in the production of these "black goods." Toward the end of the year 1815 an unknown man had established himself in the city and had conceived the idea of substituting gum-lac for resin in the manufacture; and, for bracelets in particular, he made the clasps by simply bending the ends of the metal together instead of soldering them.

This very slight change had worked a revolution.

This very slight change had, in fact, reduced the price of the raw material enormously and this had rendered it possible, first, to raise the wages of the laborer—a benefit to the country; second, to improve the quality of the goods—an advantage for the consumer; and, third, to sell them at a lower price even while making three times the profit—a gain for the manufacturer.

Thus we have three results from one idea.

In less than three years the inventor of this process had become rich, which was well, and had made all around him rich, which was better. He was a stranger in the department. Nothing was known of his birth and but little of his early history.

The story went that he came to the city with very little money, a few hundred francs at most.

From this slender capital, under the inspiration of an ingenious idea, made fruitful by order and care, he had drawn a fortune for himself and a fortune for the whole region.

On his arrival at M—— sur M—— he had the dress, the manners, and the language of a laborer only.

It seems that the very day on which he thus obscurely entered the little city of M—— sur M——, just at dusk on a December evening, with his bundle on his back and a thorn stick in his hand, a great fire had broken out in the town-house. This man rushed into the fire and saved, at the peril of his life, two children, who proved to be those of the captain of the gendarmerie, and in the hurry and gratitude of the moment no one thought to ask him for his passport. He was known from that time by the name of Father Madeleine.

II

MADELEINE

HE was a man of about fifty years of age, who always appeared to be preoccupied in mind, and who was good-natured; this was all that could be said about him.

Thanks to the rapid progress of this manufacture, to which he had given such wonderful life, M—— sur M—— had become a considerable centre of business. Immense purchases were made there every year for the Spanish markets, where there is a large demand for jet-work, and M—— sur M——, in this branch of trade, almost competed with London and Berlin. The profits of Father Madeleine were so great that by the end of the second year he was able to build a large factory, in which there were two immense workshops, one for men and the other for women; whoever was needy could go there and be sure of finding work and wages. Father Madeleine required the men to be willing, the women to be of good morals, and all to be honest. He divided the workshops and separated the sexes, in order that the girls and the women might not lose their modesty. On this point he was inflexible, although it was the only one in which he was in any degree rigid. He was confirmed in this severity by the opportunities for corruption that abounded in M—— sur M——, it being a garrisoned city. Finally, his coming had been a beneficence, and his presence was a providence. Before the arrival of Father Madeleine the whole region was languishing; now it was all alive with the healthy strength of labor. An active circulation kindled everything and penetrated everywhere. Idleness and misery,

were unknown. There was no pocket so obscure that it did not contain some money, and no dwelling so poor that it was not the abode of some joy.

Father Madeleine employed everybody; he had only one condition: "Be an honest man!" "Be an honest woman!"

As we have said, in the midst of this activity, of which he was the cause and the pivot, Father Madeleine had made his fortune, but, very strangely for a mere man of business, that did not appear to be his principal care. It seemed that he thought much for others and little for himself. In 1820 it was known that he had 630,000 francs standing to his credit in the banking-house of Lafitte; but before setting aside this 630,000 francs for himself, he had expended more than 1,000,000 francs for the city and for the poor.

The hospital was poorly endowed, and he made provision for ten additional beds. M—— sur M—— is divided into the upper city and the lower city. The lower city, where he lived, had only one schoolhouse, a miserable hovel which was fast going to ruin; he built two, one for girls, and the other for boys, and paid two teachers from his own pocket double the amount of their meagre salary from the Government; and one day he said to a neighbor who expressed surprise at this: "The two highest functionaries of the state are the nurse and the schoolmaster." He built, at his own expense, a house of refuge, an institution then almost unknown in France, and provided a fund for old and infirm laborers. About his factory, as a centre, a new quarter of the city had rapidly grown up, containing many indigent families, and he established a pharmacy that was free to all.

At first, when he began to attract the public attention, the good people would say: "This is a fellow who wishes to get rich." When they saw him enrich the country before he enriched himself the same good people said: "This man is ambitious." This seemed the more probable, since he was religious and observed the forms of the Church, to a certain extent, a thing much approved in those days. He went regularly to hear mass every Sunday. The local deputy, who scented rivalry everywhere, was not slow to borrow trouble on account of Madeleine's religion. This deputy, who had been a member of the Corps Legislatif

of the empire, partook of the religious ideas of a father of the oratory, known by the name of Fouché, Duke of Otranto, whose creature and friend he had been. In private he jested a little about God. But when he saw the rich manufacturer, Madeleine, go to low mass at seven o'clock, he foresaw a possible candidate in opposition to himself, and he resolved to outdo him. He took a Jesuit confessor, and went both to high mass and to vespers. Ambition at that time was, as the word itself imports, of the nature of a steeplechase. The poor, as well as God, gained by the terror of the honorable deputy, for he also established two beds at the hospital, which made twelve.

At length, in 1819, it was reported in the city one morning that upon the recommendation of the prefect, and in consideration of the services he had rendered to the country, Father Madeleine had been appointed by the King Mayor of M—— sur M——. Those who had pronounced the new-comer "an ambitious man" eagerly seized this opportunity, which all men desire, to exclaim: "There! what did I tell you?"

M—— sur M—— was filled with the rumor, and the report proved to be well founded, for, a few days afterward, the nomination appeared in the "Moniteur." The next day Father Madeleine declined.

In the same year, 1819, the results of the new process invented by Madeleine had a place in the industrial exhibition, and, upon the report of the jury, the King named the inventor a chevalier of the Legion of Honor. Here was a new rumor for the little city. "Well, it was the cross of the Legion of Honor that he wanted." Father Madeleine declined the cross.

Decidedly this man was an enigma, and the good people gave up the field, saying: "After all, he is a sort of an adventurer."

As we have seen, the country owed a great deal to this man, and the poor owed him everything. He was so useful that all were compelled to honor him, and so kind that none could help loving him; his workmen, in particular, adored him, and he received their adoration with a sort of melancholy gravity. After he became rich those who constituted "society" bowed to him as they met, and, in the city, he began to be called M. Madeleine; but his workmen

and the children continued to call him *Father Madeleine,* and at that name his face always wore a smile. As his wealth increased invitations rained in on him. "Society" claimed him. The little, exclusive parlors of M—— sur M——, which were carefully guarded, and in earlier days, of course, had been closed to the artisan, opened wide their doors to the millionaire. A thousand advances were made to him, but he refused them all.

And again the gossips were at no loss. "He is an ignorant man and of poor education. No one knows where he came from. He does not know how to conduct himself in good society, and it is by no means certain that he knows how to read."

When they saw him making money they said: "He is a merchant." When they saw the way in which he scattered his money they said: "He is ambitious." When they saw him refuse to accept honors they said: "He is an adventurer." When they saw him repel the advances of the fashionable they said: "He is a brute."

In 1820, five years after his arrival at M—— sur M——, the services that he had rendered to the region were so brilliant, and the wish of the whole population was so unanimous, that the King again appointed him mayor of the city. He refused again; but the prefect resisted his determination, the principal citizens came and urged him to accept, and the people in the streets begged him to do so; all insisted so strongly that at last he yielded. It was remarked that what appeared most of all to bring him to this determination was the almost angry exclamation of an old woman, belonging to the poorer class, who cried out to him from her door-stone, with some temper: "A good mayor is a good thing. Are you afraid of the good you can do?"

This was the third step in his ascent. Father Madeleine had become M. Madeleine, and M. Madeleine now became M. l'Mayor.

III

MONEYS DEPOSITED WITH LAFFITTE

NEVERTHELESS, he remained as simple as at first. He had gray hair, a serious eye, the brown complexion of a laborer, and the thoughtful countenance of a philosopher. He usually wore a hat with a wide brim and a long coat of coarse cloth buttoned to the chin. He fulfilled his duties as mayor, but beyond that his life was isolated. He talked with very few persons. He shrank from compliments, and with a touch of the hat walked on rapidly; he smiled to avoid talking and gave to avoid smiling. The women said of him: "What a good bear!" His pleasure was to walk in the fields.

He always took his meals alone, with a book open before him, in which he read. His library was small but well selected. He loved books; books are cold but sure friends. As his growing fortune gave him more leisure, it seemed that he profited by it to cultivate his mind. Since he had been at M—— sur M—— it was remarked from year to year that his language became more polished, choicer and more gentle.

In his walks he liked to carry a gun, though he seldom used it. When he did so, however, his aim was frightfully certain. He never killed an inoffensive animal, and never fired at any of the small birds.

Although he was no longer young, it was reported that he was of prodigious strength. He would offer a helping hand to any one who needed it, help up a fallen horse, push at a stalled wheel, or seize at the horns a bull that had broken loose. He always had his pocket full of money when he went out and empty when he returned. When he passed through a village the ragged little youngsters would run after him with joy and surround him like a swarm of flies.

It was surmised that he must have lived formerly in the country, for he had all sorts of useful secrets which he taught the peasants. He showed them how to destroy the grain moth by sprinkling the granary and washing the cracks of the floor with a solution of common salt and how

to drive away the weevil by hanging up all about the ceilings, and walls, in the pastures and in the houses, the flowers of the orviot. He had recipes for clearing a field of rust, of vetches, of moles, of dog-grass, and all the parasitic herbs which live upon the grain. He defended a rabbit warren against rats, with nothing but the odor of a little Barbary pig that he placed there.

One day he saw some country folks very busy pulling up nettles; he looked at the heap of plants, uprooted, and already wilted, and said: "This is dead; but it would be well if we knew how to put it to some use. When the nettle is young the leaves make excellent greens; when it grows old it has filaments and fibres like hemp and flax. Cloth made from the nettle is worth as much as that made from hemp. Chopped up, the nettle is good for poultry; pounded, it is good for horned cattle. The seed of the nettle mixed with the fodder of animals gives a lustre to their skin; the root mixed with salt produces a beautiful yellow dye. It makes, moreover, excellent hay, as it can be cut twice in a season. And what does the nettle need? Very little soil, no care, no culture, except that the seeds fall as fast as they ripen, and it is difficult to gather them; that is all. If we would take a little pains the nettle would be useful; we neglect it and it becomes harmful. Then we kill it. How much men are like the nettle!" After a short silence, he added: "My friends, remember this, that there are no bad herbs and no bad men; there are only bad cultivators."

The children loved him yet more because he knew how to make charming little playthings out of straw and cocoanuts.

When he saw the door of a church shrouded with black he entered; he sought out a funeral as others seek out a christening. The bereavement and the misfortune of others attracted him, because of his great gentleness; he mingled with friends who were in mourning, with families dressing in black, with the priests who were sighing around a corpse. He seemed glad to take as a text for his thoughts these funeral psalms, full of the vision of another world. With his eyes raised to heaven he listened with a sort of aspiration toward all the mysteries of the infinite, to these sad voices which sing upon the brink of the dark abyss of death.

He did a multitude of good deeds as secretly as bad ones are usually done. He would steal into houses in the evening and furtively mount the stairs. A poor devil, on returning to his garret, would find that his door had been opened, sometimes even forced, during his absence. The poor man would cry out: "Some thief has been here!" When he got in the first thing that he would see would be a piece of gold lying on the table. "The thief" who had been there was Father Madeleine.

He was affable and sad. The people used to say: "There is a rich man who does not show pride. There is a fortunate man who does not appear contented."

Some pretended that he was a mysterious personage, and declared that no one ever went into his room, which was a true anchorite's cell, furnished with hour-glasses and enlivened with death's-heads and cross-bones. So much was said of this kind that some of the more mischievous of the elegant young ladies of M—— sur M—— called on him one day and said: "M. l'Mayor, will you show us your room? We have heard that it is a grotto." He smiled and introduced them on the spot to this "grotto." They were well punished for their curiosity. It was a room very well fitted up with mahogany furniture ugly as all furniture of that kind is, and the walls covered with shilling paper. They could see nothing but two candlesticks of antique form that stood on the mantel-piece and appeared to be silver, "for they were marked," a remark full of the spirit of these little towns.

But none the less did it continue to be said that nobody ever went into that chamber, and that it was a hermit's cave, a place of dreams, a hole, a tomb.

It was also whispered that he had "immense" sums deposited with Laffitte, with the special condition that they were always at his immediate command, in such a way, it was added, that M. Madeleine might arrive in the morning at Laffitte's, sign a receipt, and carry away his 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 francs in ten minutes. In reality, these "2,000,000 or 3,000,000 francs" dwindled down, as we have said, to 630,000 or 640,000 francs.

IV

M. MADELEINE IN MOURNING

NEAR the beginning of the year 1821 the journals announced the decease of M. Myriel, Bishop of ——, "surnamed *M. Bienvenu*, who died in the odor of sanctity at the age of eighty-two years."

The Bishop of D——, to add an incident which the journals omitted, had been blind for several years before he died, and was content therewith, his sister being with him.

Let us say, by the way, to be blind and to be loved is, in fact, on this earth, where nothing is complete, one of the most strangely exquisite forms of happiness. To have continually at your side a woman, a girl, a sister, a charming being, who is there because you have need of her and because she can not do without you, to know you are indispensable to her who is necessary to you, to be able at all times to measure her affection by the amount of her company that she gives you, and to say to yourself: she consecrates to me all her time because I possess her whole heart; to see the thought instead of the face; to be sure of the fidelity of one being in the eclipse of the world; to imagine the rustling of her dress the rustling of wings; to hear her moving to and fro, going out, coming in, talking, singing, and to think that you are the centre of those steps, of those words, of that song; to manifest at every minute your personal attraction; to feel yourself powerful by so much the more as you are the more infirm; to become in darkness and by reason of darkness the star around which this angel gravitates; few happy lots can equal that. The supreme happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves—say, rather, loved in spite of ourselves; this conviction the blind have. In their calamity to be served it is to be caressed. Are they deprived of anything? No. Light is not lost where love enters. And what a love! a love wholly founded in purity. There is no blindness where there is certainty. The soul gropes in search of a soul and finds it. And that soul, so found and proved, is a woman. A hand sustains you, it is hers; lips lightly touch your forehead, they are her lips; you

hear one breathing near you, it is she. To have her wholly, from her devotion to her pity, never to be left; to have that sweet weakness which is your aid, to lean upon that unbending reed, to touch Providence with your hands and be able to grasp it in your arms; God made palpable, what transport! The heart, that dark but celestial flower, burst into a mysterious bloom. You would not give that shade for all light! The angel-soul is there; if she goes away, it is only to return; she fades away in dream and reappears in reality. You feel an approaching warmth, she is there. You overflow with serenity, gayety, and ecstasy; you are radiant in darkness. And the thousand little cares! The nothings which are enormous in this void. The most unspeakable accents of the womanly voice employed to soothe you, and making up to you the vanished universe! You are caressed through the soul. You see nothing, but you feel yourself adored. It is a paradise of darkness.

From this paradise Mgr. Bienvenu passed to the other.

The announcement of his death was reproduced in the local paper of M—— sur M——. M. Madeleine appeared next morning dressed in black, with crape on his hat.

This mourning was noticed and talked about all over the town. It appeared to throw some light upon the origin of M. Madeleine. The conclusion was that he was in some way related to the venerable bishop. "He wears black for the Bishop of D——," was the talk of the drawing-rooms. It elevated M. Madeleine very much, and gave him suddenly, and in a trice, marked consideration in the noble world of M—— sur M——. The microscopic Faubourg St. Germain of the little place thought of raising the quarantine for M. Madeleine, the probable relative of a bishop. M. Madeleine perceived the advancement that he had obtained, by the greater reverence of the old ladies and the more frequent smiles of the young ladies. One evening one of the dowagers of that little great world, curious by right of age, ventured to ask him: "The mayor is doubtless a relative of the late Bishop of D——?"

He said: "No, madame."

"But," the dowager persisted, "you wear mourning for him?"

He answered: "In my youth I was a servant in his family."

It was also remarked that whenever there passed through the city a young Savoyard, who was tramping about the country in search of chimneys to sweep, the mayor would send for him, ask his name, and give him money. The little Savoyards told each other, and many of them passed that way.

V

VAGUE FLASHES IN THE HORIZON

LITTLE by little in the lapse of time all opposition had ceased. At first there had been, as always happens with those who rise by their own efforts, slanders and calumnies against M. Madeleine. Soon all this was reduced to satire; then it was only wit; then it vanished entirely. Respect became complete, unanimous, cordial, and there came a moment, about 1821, when the words M. l'Mayor were pronounced at M——sur M—— with almost the same accent as the words monseigneur the bishop at D—— in 1815. People came from thirty miles round to consult M. Madeleine. He settled differences; he prevented lawsuits; he reconciled enemies. Everybody, of his own will, chose him for judge. He seemed to have the book of the natural law by heart. A contagion of veneration had, in the course of six or seven years, step by step, spread over the whole country.

One man alone, in the city and its neighborhood, held himself entirely clear from this contagion, and whatever Father Madeleine did he remained indifferent, as if a sort of instinct, unchangeable and imperturbable, kept him awake and on the watch. It would seem, indeed, that there is in certain men the veritable instinct of a beast, pure and complete like all instincts, which creates antipathies and sympathies, which separates one nature from another forever; which never hesitates, never is perturbed, never keeps silent, and never admits itself to be in the wrong; clear in its obscurity, infallible, imperious, refractory under all the counsels of intelligence and all the solvents of reason, and which, whatever may be their destinies, secretly warns the dog-man of the presence of the cat-man, and the fox-man of the presence of the lion-man.

Often, when M. Madeleine passed along the street, calm,

affectionate, followed by the benedictions of all, it happened that a tall man, wearing a flat hat and an iron-gray coat, and armed with a stout cane, would turn around abruptly behind him, and follow him with his eyes until he disappeared, crossing his arms, slowly shaking his head, and pushing his upper with his under lip up to his nose, a sort of significant grimace which might be rendered by: "But what is that man? I am sure I have seen him somewhere. At all events, I at least am not his dupe."

This personage, grave with an almost threatening gravity, was one of those who, even in a hurried interview, commanded the attention of the observer.

His name was Javert, and he was one of the police.

He exercised at M—— sur M—— the unpleasant, but useful, function of inspector. He was not there at the date of Madeleine's arrival. Javert owed his position to the protection of M. Chabouillet, the secretary of the Minister of State, Count Anglès, then Prefect of Police at Paris. When Javert arrived at M—— sur M—— the fortune of the great manufacturer had been made already, and Father Madeleine had become M. Madeleine.

Certain police officers have a peculiar physiognomy, in which can be traced an air of meanness mingled with an air of authority. Javert had this physiognomy without meanness.

It is our conviction that if souls were visible to the eye we should distinctly see this strange fact that each individual of the human species corresponds to some one of the species of the animal creation; and we should clearly recognize the truth, hardly perceived by thinkers, that, from the oyster to the eagle, from the swine to the tiger, all animals are in man; and that each of them is in a man; sometimes, even, several of them at a time.

Animals are nothing but the forms of our virtues and vices, wandering before our eyes, the visible phantoms of our souls. God shows them to us to make us reflect. Only, as animals are but shadows, God has not made them capable of education in the complete sense of the word. Why should he? On the contrary, our souls being realities and having their peculiar end, God has given them intelligence, that is to say, the possibility of education. Social education, well attended to, can always draw

out of a soul, whatever it may be, the usefulness that it contains.

Be this said, nevertheless, from the restricted point of view of the apparent earthly life, and without prejudice to the deep question of the anterior or ulterior personality of the beings that are not man. The visible *me* in no way authorizes the thinker to deny the latent *me*. With this reservation let us pass on.

Now, if we admit for a moment that there is in every man some one of the species of the animal creation, it will be easy for us to describe the guardian of the peace—Javert.

The peasants of the Asturias believe that in every litter of wolves there is one dog, which is killed by the mother, lest on growing up it should devour the other little ones.

Give a human face to this dog-son of a wolf and you will have Javert.

Javert was born in prison. His mother was a fortune-teller, whose husband was in the galleys. He grew up to think himself without the pale of society, and despaired of ever entering it. He noticed that society closes its doors, without pity, on two classes of men, those who attack it and those who guard it; he could choose between these two classes only. At the same time he felt that he had an indescribable basis of rectitude, order, and honesty, associated with an irrepressible hatred for that gypsy race to which he belonged. He entered the police. He succeeded. At forty he was an inspector.

In his youth he had been stationed in the galleys at the south.

Before going further, let us understand what we mean by the words human face, which we have just now applied to Javert.

The human face of Javert consisted of a snub nose, with two deep nostrils, which were bordered by large, bushy whiskers that covered both his cheeks. One felt ill at ease the first time he saw those two forests and those two caverns. When Javert laughed, which was rarely and terribly, his thin lips parted and showed not only his teeth, but his gums; and around his nose there was a wrinkle as broad and wild as the muzzle of a fallow deer; Javert, when serious, was a bull-dog; when he laughed,

he was a tiger. For the rest, a small head, large jaws, hair hiding the forehead and falling over the eyebrows, between the eyes a permanent central frown, a gloomy look, a mouth pinched and frightful, and an air of fierce command.

This man was a compound of two sentiments, very simple and very good in themselves, but he almost made them evil by his exaggeration of them: respect for authority and hatred of rebellion; and, in his eyes, theft, murder, all crimes, were only forms of rebellion. In his strong and implicit faith he included all who held any function in the state, from the Prime Minister to the constable. He had nothing but disdain, aversion, and disgust for all who had once overstepped the bounds of the law. He was absolute and admitted no exceptions. On the one hand, he said: "A public officer can not be deceived; a magistrate never does wrong." And on the other, he said: "They are irremediably lost; no good can come out of them." He shared fully the opinions of those extremists who attribute to human laws an indescribable power of making, or if you will of determining, demons, and who place a Styx at the bottom of society. He was stoical, serious, austere; a dreamer of stern dreams; humble and haughty, like all fanatics. His stare was cold and as piercing as a gimlet. His whole life was contained in these two words—waiting and watching. He marked out a straight path through the most tortuous thing in the world; his conscience was bound up in his utility, his religion in his duties, and he was a spy as others are priests. Woe to him who should fall into his hands. He would have arrested his father if escaping from the galleys and denounced his mother for violating her ticket-of-leave. And he would have done it with that sort of interior satisfaction that springs from virtue. His life was a life of privation, isolation, self-denial, and chastity; never any amusement. It was implacable duty, absorbed in the police, as the Spartans were absorbed in Sparta, a pitiless detective, a fierce honesty, a marble-hearted informer, Brutus united with Vidocq.

The whole person of Javert expressed the spy and the informer. The mystic school of Joseph de Maistre, which at that time enlivened what were called the ultra journals

with high-sounding cosmogonies, would have said that Javert was a symbol. You could not see his forehead, which disappeared under his hat; you could not see his eyes, which were lost under his brows; you could not see his chin, which was buried in his cravat; you could not see his hands, which were drawn up into his sleeves; you could not see his cane, which he carried under his coat. But, when the time came, you would see spring all at once out of this shadow, as from an ambush, a steep and narrow forehead, an ominous look, a threatening chin, enormous hands, and a monstrous club.

In his leisure moments, which were rare, although he hated books, he read; wherefore he was not entirely illiterate. This was perceived also from a certain emphasis in his speech.

He was free from vice, we have said. When he was satisfied with himself he allowed himself a pinch of snuff. That proved that he was human.

It will be easily understood that Javert was the terror of all that class which the annual statistics of the Minister of Justice include under the heading: *People without a fixed abode.* To speak the name of Javert would put all such to flight; the face of Javert petrified them.

Such was this formidable man.

Javert was like an eye, always fixed on M. Madeleine; an eye full of suspicion and conjecture. M. Madeleine finally noticed it, but seemed to consider it of no consequence. He asked no question of Javert; he neither sought him nor shunned him; he endured this unpleasant and annoying stare without appearing to pay any attention to it. He treated Javert as he did everybody else, at ease and with kindness.

From some words that Javert had dropped it was guessed that he had secretly hunted up, with that curiosity which belongs to his race, and which is more a matter of instinct than of will, all the traces of his previous life which Father Madeleine had left elsewhere. He appeared to know, and he said sometimes, in a covert way, that somebody had gathered certain information, in a certain region, about a certain missing family. Once he happened to say, speaking to himself: "I think I have got him!" Then, for three days, he remained moody, without

speaking a word. It appeared that the clew which he thought he had was broken.

But—and this is the necessary corrective to what the meaning of certain words may have presented in too absolute a sense—there can be nothing really infallible in a human creature, and the very peculiarity of instinct is that it can be disturbed, followed up, and routed. Were this not so it would be superior to intelligence, and the beast would be in possession of a purer light than man.

Javert was evidently somewhat disconcerted by the completely natural air and the tranquillity of M. Madeleine.

One day, however, his strange manner appeared to make an impression upon M. Madeleine. The occasion was this.

VI

FATHER FAUCHELEVENT

M. MADELEINE was walking one morning along one of the unpaved alleys of M—— sur M——; he heard a shouting and saw a crowd at a little distance. He went to the spot. An old man, named Father Fauchelevent, had fallen under his cart, his horse being thrown down.

This Fauchelevent was one of the few who were still enemies of M. Madeleine at this time. When Madeleine arrived in the place, the business of Fauchelevent, who was a notary of long standing, and very well-read for a rustic, was beginning to decline. Fauchelevent had seen this mere artisan grow rich, while he himself, a professional man, had been going to ruin. This had filled him with jealousy, and he had done what he could on all occasions to injure Madeleine. Then came bankruptcy, and the old man, having nothing but a horse and cart, as he was without family and without children, was compelled to earn his living as a carman.

The horse had his thighs broken and could not stir. The old man was caught between the wheels. Unluckily he had fallen so that the whole weight had rested upon his breast. The cart was heavily loaded. Father Fauchelevent was uttering doleful groans. They had tried to pull him out, but in vain. An unlucky effort, inexpert help, a false push might crush him. It was impossible to extricate

him otherwise than by raising the wagon from beneath. Javert, who came up at the moment of the accident, had sent for a jack.

M. Madeleine came. The crowd fell back with respect.

"Help," cried old Fauchelevent. "Who is a good fellow to save an old man?"

M. Madeleine turned toward the bystanders: "Has anybody a jack?"

"They have gone for one," replied a peasant.

"How soon will it be here?"

"We sent to the nearest place, to Flachot Place, where there is a blacksmith; but it will take a good quarter of an hour at least."

"A quarter of an hour!" exclaimed Madeleine.

It had rained the night before, the road was soft, the cart was sinking deeper every moment, and pressing more and more on the breast of the old carman. It was evident that in less than five minutes his ribs would be crushed.

"We can not wait a quarter of an hour," said Madeleine to the peasants who were looking on.

"We must!"

"But it will be too late! Don't you see that the wagon is sinking all the while?"

"It can't be helped."

"Listen," resumed Madeleine, "there is room enough still under the wagon for a man to crawl in and lift it with his back. In half a minute we will have the poor man out. Is there nobody here who has strength and courage? Five louis-d'or for him!"

Nobody stirred in the crowd.

"Ten louis," said Madeleine.

The bystanders dropped their eyes. One of them muttered: "He'd have to be devilish stout. And then he would risk getting crushed."

"Come," said Madeleine, "twenty louis."

The same silence.

"It is not willingness which they lack," said a voice.

M. Madeleine turned and saw Javert. He had not noticed him when he came.

Javert continued: "It is strength. He must be a terrible man who can raise a wagon like that on his back."

Then, looking fixedly at M. Madeleine, he went on, em-

phasizing every word that he uttered: "M. Madeleine, I have known but one man capable of doing what you call for."

Madeleine shuddered.

Javert added, with an air of indifference, but without taking his eyes from Madeleine: "He was a convict."

"Ah!" said Madeleine.

"In the galleys at Toulon."

Madeleine became pale.

Meanwhile, the cart was slowly settling down. Father Fauchelevent roared and screamed: "I am dying! my ribs are breaking! a jack! anything! oh!"

Madeleine looked around him: "Is there nobody, then, who wants to earn twenty louis and save this poor old man's life?"

None of the bystanders moved. Javert resumed: "I have known but one man who could take the place of a jack; that was that convict."

"Oh! how it crushes me!" cried the old man.

Madeleine raised his head, met the falcon eye of Javert still fixed upon him, looked at the immovable peasants, and smiled sadly. Then, without saying a word, he fell on his knees, and, even before the crowd had time to utter a cry, he was under the cart.

There was an awful moment of suspense and of silence.

Madeleine, lying almost flat under the fearful weight, was twice seen to try in vain to bring his elbows and knees nearer together. They cried out to him: "Father Madeleine! come out from there!" Old Fauchelevent himself said: "M. Madeleine! go away! I must die, you see that; leave me; you will be crushed, too." Madeleine made no answer.

The bystanders held their breath. The wheels were sinking, and it had now become almost impossible for Madeleine to extricate himself.

All at once the enormous mass started, the cart rose slowly, the wheels came half out of the ruts. A smothered voice was heard, crying: "Quick! help!" It was Madeleine, who had just made a final effort.

They all rushed to the work. The devotion of one man had given strength and courage to all. The cart was lifted by twenty arms. Old Fauchelevent was safe.

Madeleine arose. He was very pale, though dripping with sweat. His clothes were torn and covered with mud. All wept. The old man kissed his knees and called him the good God. He himself wore on his face an indescribable expression of joyous and celestial suffering, and he looked with tranquil eye upon Javert, who was still watching him.

VII

FAUCHELEVENT BECOMES A GARDENER AT PARIS

FAUCHELEVENT had broken his knee-pan in his fall. Father Madeleine had him carried to an infirmary that he had established for his workmen in the same building with his factory, which was attended by two sisters of charity. The next morning the old man found a 1,000-franc bill upon the stand by the side of the bed, with this note in the handwriting of Father Madeleine: "I have purchased your horse and cart." The cart was broken and the horse was dead. Fauchelevent got well, but he had a stiff knee. M. Madeleine, through the recommendation of the sisters and the curé, got the old man a place as gardener at a convent in the Quartier St. Antoine at Paris.

Some time afterward M. Madeleine was appointed mayor. The first time that Javert saw M. Madeleine clothed with the scarf which gave him full authority over the city he felt the same sort of shudder which a bull-dog would feel who should scent a wolf in his master's clothes. From that time he avoided him as much as he could. When the necessities of the service imperiously demanded it, and he could not do otherwise than come in contact with the mayor, he spoke to him with profound respect.

The prosperity which Father Madeleine had created at M—— sur M——, in addition to the visible signs that we have pointed out, had another symptom which, although not visible, was not the less significant. This never fails. When the population is suffering, when there is lack of work, when trade falls off, the taxpayer, constrained by poverty, resists taxation, exhausts and overruns the delays allowed by law, and the Government is forced to incur large expenditures in the costs of levy and collection.

When work is abundant, when the country is rich and happy, the tax is easily paid and costs the state but little to collect. It may be said that poverty and public wealth have an infallible thermometer in the cost of the collection of the taxes. In seven years the cost of the collection of the taxes had been reduced three-quarters in the district of M—— sur M——, so that that district was frequently referred to, especially by M. de Villèle, then Minister of Finance.

Such was the situation of the country when Fantine returned. No one remembered her. Luckily the door of M. Madeleine's factory was like the face of a friend. She presented herself there, and was admitted into the workshop for women. The business was entirely new to Fantine; she could not be very expert in it, and consequently did not receive much for her day's work; but that little was enough, the problem was solved; she was earning her living.

VIII

MME. VICTURNIEN SPENDS THIRTY FRANCS ON MORALITY

WHEN Fantine realized how she was living she had a moment of joy. To live honestly by her own labor —what a heavenly boon! The taste for labor returned to her, in truth. She bought a mirror, delighted herself with the sight of her youth, her fine hair and her fine teeth, forgot many things, thought of nothing save Cosette and the possibilities of the future, and was almost happy. She hired a small room and furnished it on the credit of her future labor; a remnant of her habits of disorder.

Not being able to say that she was married, she took good care, as we have already intimated, not to speak of her little girl.

At first, as we have seen, she paid the Thenardiers punctually. As she only knew how to sign her name, she was obliged to write through a public letter-writer.

She wrote often; that was noticed. They began to whisper in the women's workshop that Fantine "wrote letters," and that "she had airs." For prying into any human affairs, none are equal to those whom it does not

concern. "Why does this gentleman never come till dusk?" "Why does Mr. So-and-So never hang his key on the nail on Thursday?" "Why does he always take the by-streets?" "Why does madame always leave her carriage before getting to the house?" "Why does she send to buy a quire of writing paper when she has her portfolio full of it?" etc. There are persons who, to solve these enigmas, which are, moreover, perfectly immaterial to them, spend more money, waste more time, and give themselves more trouble than would suffice for ten good deeds; and that gratuitously, and for the pleasure of it, without being paid for their curiosity in any other way than by curiosity. They will follow this man or that woman whole days, stand guard for hours at the corners of the streets, under the entrance of a passageway, at night, in the cold and in the rain, bring messengers, get hack-drivers and lackeys drunk, fee a chambermaid, or buy a porter. For what? for nothing. Pure craving, to see, to know, and to find out. Pure itching for scandal. And often these secrets made known, these mysteries published, these enigmas brought into the light of day, lead to catastrophes, to duels, to failures, to the ruin of families, and make lives wretched, to the great joy of those who have "discovered all" without any interest, and from pure instinct. A sad thing.

Some people are malicious from the mere necessity of talking. Their conversation, tattling in the drawing-room, gossip in the ante-chamber, is like those fireplaces that use up wood rapidly; they need a great deal of fuel; the fuel is their neighbor.

So Fantine was watched.

Beyond this, more than one was jealous of her fair hair and of her white teeth.

It was reported that in the shop, with all the rest about her, she often turned aside to wipe away a tear. Those were moments when she thought of her child; perhaps also of the man whom she had loved.

It is a mournful task to break the sombre attachments of the past.

It was ascertained that she wrote at least twice a month, and always to the same address, and that she prepaid the postage. They succeeded in learning the address: "M. Thenardier, innkeeper, Montfermeil." The public letter-

writer, a simple old fellow, who could not fill his stomach with red wine without emptying his pocket of his secrets, was made to reveal this at a drinking-house. In short, it became known that Fantine had a child. "She must be that sort of a woman." And there was one old gossip who went to Montfermeil, talked with the Thenardiers, and said on her return: "For my 35 francs I have found out all about it. I have seen the child!"

The busy-body who did this was a beldame called Mme. Victurnien, keeper and guardian of everybody's virtue. Mme. Victurnien was fifty-six years old, and wore a mask of old age over her mask of ugliness. Her voice trembled, and she was capricious. It seemed strange, but this woman had been young. In her youth, in '93, she married a monk who had escaped from the cloister in a red cap, and passed from the Bernardines to the Jacobins. She was dry, rough, sour, sharp, crabbed, almost venomous—never forgetting her monk whose widow she was, and who had ruled and curbed her harshly. She was a nettle bruised by a frock. At the Restoration she became a bigot, and so energetically that the priests had pardoned her monk episode. She had a little property, which she had bequeathed to a religious community with great flourish. She was in very good standing at the bishop's palace in Arras. This Mme. Victurnien then went to Montfermeil, and returned, saying: "I have seen the child."

All this took time; Fantine had been more than a year at the factory, when one morning the overseer of the workshop handed her, on behalf of the mayor, 50 francs, saying that she was no longer wanted in the shop, and enjoining her, on behalf of the mayor, to leave the city.

This was the very same month in which the Thenardiers, after having asked 12 francs instead of 6, had demanded 15 francs instead of 12.

Fantine was thunderstruck. She could not leave the city; she was in debt for her lodging and her furniture. Fifty francs were not enough to clear off that debt. She faltered out some suppliant words. The overseer gave her to understand that she must leave the shop instantly. Fantine was, moreover, only a moderate worker. Overwhelmed with shame even more than with despair, she left the shop

and returned to her room. Her fault, then, was now known to all!

She felt no strength to say a word. She was advised to see the mayor; she dared not. The mayor gave her 50 francs because he was kind, and sent her away because he was just. She bowed to that decree.

IX

SUCCESS OF MME. VICTURNIEN

THE monk's widow was, then, good for something.

M. Madeleine had known nothing of all this. These are combinations of events of which life is full. It was M. Madeleine's habit scarcely ever to enter the women's workshop.

He had placed at the head of this shop an old spinster whom the curé had recommended to him, and he had entire confidence in this overseer, a very respectable person; firm, just, upright, full of that charity which consists in giving, but not having to the same extent that charity which consists in understanding and pardoning. M. Madeleine left everything to her. The best men are often compelled to delegate their authority. It was in the exercise of this full power and with the conviction that she was doing right, that the overseer had framed the indictment, tried, condemned, and executed Fantine.

As to the 50 francs, she had given them from a fund that M. Madeleine had intrusted her with for almsgiving and aid to the workwomen, and of which she rendered no account.

Fantine offered herself as a servant in the neighborhood; she went from one house to another. Nobody wanted her. She could not leave the city. The second-hand dealer to whom she was in debt for her furniture, and such furniture! had said to her: "If you go away, I will have you arrested as a thief." The landlord, whom she owed for rent, had said to her: "You are young and pretty, you can pay." She divided the 50 francs between the landlord and the dealer, returned to the latter three-quarters of the goods, kept only what was necessary, and found herself without work, without position, having nothing but her bed, and owing still about 100 francs.

She began to make coarse shirts for the soldiers of the garrison, and earned 12 sous a day. Her daughter cost her 10 sous. It was at this time that she began to get behindhand with the Thenardiers.

However, an old woman who lighted her candle for her when she came home at night taught her the art of living in misery. Behind living on a little lies the art of living on nothing. They are two rooms; the first is obscure, the second is utterly dark.

Fantine learned how to do entirely without fire in winter, how to give up a bird that eats a farthing's worth of millet every other day, how to make a coverlid of her petticoat and a petticoat of her coverlid, how to save her candle in taking her meals by the light of an opposite window. Few know how much certain feeble beings, who have grown old in privation and honesty, can extract from a sou. This finally becomes a talent. Fantine acquired this sublime talent and took heart a little.

During these times she said to a neighbor: "Bah! I say to myself; by sleeping but five hours and working all the rest at my sewing, I shall always succeed in nearly earning bread. And, then, when one is sad, one eats less. Well! what with sufferings, troubles, a little bread on the one hand, anxiety on the other, all that will keep me alive."

In this distress, to have had her little daughter would have been a strange happiness. She thought of having her come. But what? To make her share her privation? and then, she owed the Thenardiers. How could she pay them? And the journey! how to pay for that?

The old woman who had given her what might be called lessons in indigent life was a pious woman, Marguerite by name, a devotee of genuine devotion, poor and charitable to the poor and also to the rich, knowing how to write just enough to sign "Marguerite," and believing in God, which is science.

There are many of these virtues in low places; some day they will be on high. This life has a morrow.

At first Fantine was so much ashamed that she did not dare to go out.

When she was in the street she imagined that people turned behind her and pointed at her; everybody looked at her and no one greeted her; the sharp and cold disdain

of the passers-by penetrated her, body and soul, like a north wind.

In small cities an unfortunate woman seems to be laid bare to the sarcasm and the curiosity of all. In Paris, at least, nobody knows you, and that obscurity is a covering. Oh! how she longed to go to Paris! Impossible.

She must, indeed, become accustomed to disrespect as she had to poverty. Little by little she learned her part. After two or three months she shook off her shame and went out as if there were nothing in the way. "It is all one to me," said she.

She went and came, holding her head up and wearing a bitter smile, and felt that she was becoming shameless.

Mme. Victurnien sometimes saw her pass her window, noticed the distress of "that creature," thanks to her, "put back to her place," and congratulated herself. The malicious have a dark happiness.

Excessive work fatigued Fantine, and the slight dry cough that she had increased. She sometimes said to her neighbor, Marguerite: "Just feel how hot my hands are."

In the morning, however, when, with an old broken comb she combed her fine hair, which flowed down in silky waves, she enjoyed a moment of happiness.

X

RESULTS OF THE SUCCESS

SHE had been discharged toward the end of winter; summer passed away, but winter returned. Short days, less work. In winter there is no heat, no light, no moon; evening touches morning; there is fog and mist; the window is frosted and you can not see clearly. The sky is but the mouth of a cave. The whole day is a cave. The sun has the appearance of a pauper. Frightful season! Winter changes into stone the water of heaven and the heart of man. Her creditors harassed her.

Fantine earned too little; her debts had increased. The Thenardiers, being poorly paid, were constantly writing letters to her, the contents of which disheartened her, while the postage was ruining her. One day they wrote to her that her little Cosette was entirely destitute of cloth-

ing for the cold weather, that she needed a woolen skirt, and that her mother must send at least ten francs for that. She received the letter and crushed it in her hand for a whole day. In the evening she went into a barber's shop at the corner of the street and pulled out her comb. Her beautiful fair hair fell below her waist.

"What beautiful hair!" exclaimed the barber.

"How much will you give me for it?" said she.

"Ten francs."

"Cut it off."

She bought a knit skirt and sent it to the Thenardiers.

This skirt made the Thenardiers furious. It was the money that they wanted. They gave the skirt to Eponine. The poor Lark still shivered.

Fantine thought: "My child is no longer cold; I have clothed her with my hair."

She put on a little round cap, which concealed her shorn head, and with that she was still pretty.

A gloomy work was going on in Fantine's heart.

When she saw that she could no longer dress her hair she began to look with hatred on all around her. She had long shared in the universal veneration for Father Madeleine; nevertheless, by dint of repeating to herself that it was he who had turned her away and that he was the cause of her misfortunes, she came to hate him also, and especially when she passed the factory at the hours in which the laborers were at the door she forced herself to laugh and sing.

An old working-woman who saw her once singing and laughing in this way said: "There is a girl who will come to a bad end."

She took a lover—the first comer—a man whom she did not love, through bravado and with rage in her heart. He was a wretch, a kind of mendicant musician, a lazy ragamuffin, who beat her and who left her, as she had taken him, with disgust.

She worshiped her child.

The lower she sank, the more all became gloomy around her, the more the sweet little angel shone out in the bottom of her heart. She would say: "When I am rich I shall have my Cosette with me;" and she laughed.

The cough did not leave her and she had night sweats.

One day she received from the Thenardiers a letter in these words: "Cosette is sick of an epidemic disease—a miliary fever they call it. The drugs necessary are dear. It is ruining us and we can no longer pay for them. Unless you send us 40 francs within a week the little one will die."

She burst out laughing and said to her old neighbor: "Oh, they are nice! Forty francs—think of that! That is two napoleons! Where do they think I can get them? Are they fools, these boors?"

She went, however, to the staircase, near a dormer window, and read the letter again.

Then she went downstairs and out of doors, running and jumping, still laughing.

Somebody who met her said to her: "What is the matter with you that you are so gay?"

She answered: "A stupid joke that some country people have just written me. They ask me for forty francs, the boors."

As she passed through the square she saw many people gathered about an odd-looking carriage, on the top of which stood a man in red clothes declaiming. He was a juggler and a traveling dentist, and was offering to the public complete sets of teeth, opiates, powders, and elixirs.

Fantine joined the crowd and began to laugh with the rest at this harangue, in which were mingled slang for the rabble and jargon for the better sort. The puller of teeth saw this beautiful girl laughing and suddenly called out: "You have pretty teeth, you girl who are laughing there. If you will sell me your two incisors I will give you a gold napoleon for each of them."

"What is that? What are my incisors?" asked Fantine.

"The incisors," resumed the professor of dentistry, "are the front teeth, the two upper ones."

"How horrible!" cried Fantine.

"Two napoleons!" grumbled a toothless old hag who stood by. "How lucky she is!"

Fantine fled away and stopped her ears not to hear the shrill voice of the man, who called after her: "Consider, my beauty! Two napoleons! How much good they will do you! If you have the courage for it, come this evening to the inn of the Tillac d'Argent; you will find me there."

Fantine returned home. She was raving, and told the story to her good neighbor, Marguerite: "Do you understand that? Isn't he an abominable man; why do they let such people go about the country? Pull out my two front teeth—why, I should be horrible! The hair is bad enough; but the teeth—oh! what a monster of a man! I would rather throw myself from the fifth story, head first, to the pavement. He told me that he would be this evening at the Tillac d'Argent."

"And what was it he offered you?" asked Marguerite.

"Two napoleons."

"That is forty francs."

"Yes," said Fantine; "that makes forty francs."

She became thoughtful and went about her work. In a quarter of an hour she left her sewing and went to the stairs to read again the Thenardiers' letter.

On her return she said to Marguerite, who was at work near her: "What does this mean—a miliary fever? Do you know?"

"Yes," answered the old woman. "It is a disease."

"Then it needs a good many drugs?"

"Yes; terrible drugs."

"How does it come upon you?"

"It is a disease that comes in a moment."

"Does it attack children?"

"Children especially."

"Do people die of it?"

"Very often," said Marguerite.

Fantine withdrew and went once more to read over the letter on the stairs.

In the evening she went out and took the direction of the Rue de Paris where the inns are.

The next morning when Marguerite went into Fantine's chamber before daybreak—for they always worked together, and so made one candle do for two—she found Fantine seated upon her couch, pale and icy. She had not been in bed. Her cap had fallen upon her knees. The candle had burned all night and was almost consumed.

Marguerite stopped upon the threshold, petrified by this wild disorder, and exclaimed: "Good Lord! the candle is all burned out. Something has happened."

Then she looked at Fantine, who sadly turned her shorn head.

Fantine had grown ten years older since evening.

"Bless us," said Marguerite, "what is the matter with you, Fantine?"

"Nothing," said Fantine. "Quite the contrary. My child will not die with that frightful sickness for lack of aid. I am satisfied."

So saying, she showed the old woman two napoleons that glistened on the table.

"Oh! good God!" said Marguerite. "Why, there is a fortune! Where did you get these louis d'or?"

"I got them," answered Fantine.

At the same time she smiled. The candle lighted up her face. It was a sickening smile, for the corners of her mouth were stained with blood, and a dark cavity revealed itself there.

The two teeth were gone.

She sent the forty francs to Montfermeil.

And this was a ruse of the Thenardiers' to get money. Cosette was not sick.

Fantine threw her looking-glass out of the window. Long before she had left her little room on the second story for an attic room with no other fastenings than a latch; one of those garret rooms the ceiling of which makes an angle with the floor and hits your head at every moment. The poor can not go to the end of their chamber or to the end of their destiny, but by bending continually more and more. She no longer had a bed, she retained a rag that she called her coverlid, a mattress on the floor, and a worn-out straw chair. Her little rose-bush was dried up in the corner, forgotten. In the other corner was a butter-pot for water, which froze in the winter, and the different levels at which the water had stood remained marked a long time by circles of ice. She had lost her modesty, she was losing her coquetry. The last sign. She would go out with a dirty cap. Either from want of time or from indifference she no longer washed her linen. As fast as the heels of her stockings wore out she drew them down into her shoes. This was shown by certain perpendicular wrinkles. She mended her old, worn-out corsets with bits of calico which were torn by the slightest motion. Her

creditors quarreled with her and gave her no rest. She met them in the street, she met them again on her stairs. She passed whole nights in weeping and thinking. She had a strange brilliancy in her eyes and a constant pain in her shoulder, near the top of her left shoulder-blade. She coughed a great deal. She hated Father Madeleine thoroughly and never complained. She sewed seventeen hours a day; but a prison contractor, who was working prisoners at a loss, suddenly cut down the price, and this reduced the day's wages of free laborers to nine sous. Seventeen hours of work and nine sous a day! Her creditors were more pitiless than ever. The second-hand dealer, who had taken back nearly all his furniture, was constantly saying to her:

"When will you pay me, wench?"

Good God! what did they want her to do? She felt herself hunted down, and something of the wild beast began to develop within her. About the same time Thenardier wrote to her that, really, he had waited with too much generosity, and that he must have 100 francs immediately, or else little Cosette, just convalescing after her severe sickness, would be turned out of doors into the cold and upon the highway, and that she would become what she could, and would perish if she must. "A hundred francs," thought Fantine. "But where is there a place where one can earn 100 sous a day?"

"Come!" said she, "I will sell what is left."

The unfortunate creature became a woman of the town.

XI

CHRISTUS NOS LIBERAVIT

WHAT is this history of Fantine? It is society buying a slave.

From whom? From misery.

From hunger, from cold, from loneliness, from abandonment, from privation. Melancholy barter. A soul for a bit of bread. Misery makes the offer, society accepts.

The holy law of Jesus Christ governs our civilization, but it does not yet permeate it; it is said that slavery has

disappeared from European civilization. That is a mistake. It still exists; but it weighs now only upon woman, and it is called prostitution.

It weighs upon woman, that is to say, upon grace, upon feebleness, upon beauty, upon maternity. This is not one of the least of man's shames.

At the stage of this mournful drama, at which we have now arrived, Fantine has nothing left of what she had formerly been. She has become marble in becoming corrupted. Whoever touches her feels a chill. She goes her ways, she endures you, and she knows you not; she wears a dishonored and severe face. Life and social order have spoken their last word to her. All that can happen to her has happened. She has endured all, borne all, experienced all, suffered all, lost all, wept for all. She is resigned with that resignation that resembles indifference as death resembles sleep. She shuns nothing now. She fears nothing now. Every cloud falls upon her and all the ocean sweeps over her! What matters it to her? The sponge is already drenched.

She believed so at least, but it is a mistake to imagine that man can exhaust his destiny or can reach the bottom of anything whatever.

Alas! what are all these destinies thus driven pell-mell? whither go they? why are they so?

He who knows that sees all the shadow.

He is alone. His name is God.

XII

THE IDLENESS OF M. BAMATABOIS

THERE is in all small cities, and there was at M—— sur M—— in particular, a set of young men who nibble their 1,500 livres of income in the country with the same air with which their fellows devour 200,000 francs a year at Paris. They are beings of the great neuter species—geldings, parasites, nobodies, who have a little land, a little folly, and a little wit, who would be clowns in a drawing-room and think themselves gentlemen in a bar-room, who talk about "my fields, my woods, my peasants," hiss the actresses at the theatre to prove that they are per-

sons of taste, quarrel with the officers of the garrison to show that they are gallant, hunt, smoke, gape, drink, take snuff, play billiards, stare at passengers getting out of the coach, live at the café, dine at the inn, have a dog who eats the bones under the table and a mistress who sets the dishes upon it, hold fast to a sou, overdo the fashions, admire tragedy, despise women, wear out their old boots, copy London as reflected from Paris, and Paris as reflected from Pont-à-Mousson, grow stupid as they grow old, do no work, do no good, and not much harm.

M. Félix Tholomyès, had he remained in his province and never seen Paris, would have been such a man.

If they were richer, we would say: they are dandies; if they were poorer, we would say: they are vagabonds. They are simply idlers. Among these idlers there are some bores, some that are bored, some dreamers, and some jokers.

In those days a dandy was made up of a large collar, a large cravat, a watch loaded with chains, three waistcoats worn one over the other, of different colors, the red and the blue within, a short olive-colored coat with a fish-tail skirt, a double row of silver buttons alternating with one another and running up to the shoulder, and pantaloons of a lighter olive, ornamented at the two seams with an indefinite but always odd number of ribs, varying from one to eleven, a limit which was never exceeded. Add to this, Blucher boots with little iron caps on the heels, a high-crowned and narrow-brimmed hat, hair bushed out, an enormous cane, and conversation spiced with the puns of Potier. Above all, spurs and mustaches. In those days mustaches meant civilians and spurs meant pedestrians.

The provincial dandy wore longer spurs and fiercer mustaches.

It was the time of the war of South American republics against the King of Spain, of Bolivar against Morillo. Hats with narrow brims were royalist, and were called Morillos; the liberals wore hats with wide brims, which were called Bolivars.

Eight or ten months after what has been related in the preceding pages, in the early part of January, 1823, one evening when it had been snowing, one of these dandies, one of these idlers, a "well-intentioned" man, for he wore

a Morillo, very warmly wrapped in one of those large cloaks which completed the fashionable costume in cold weather, was amusing himself with tormenting a creature who was walking back and forth before the window of the officers' café, in a ball-dress, with her neck and shoulders bare and flowers upon her head. The dandy was smoking, for that was decidedly the fashion.

Every time that the woman passed before him he threw out at her, with a puff of smoke from his cigar, some remark that he thought was witty and pleasant, as: "How ugly you are!" "Are you trying to hide?" "You have lost your teeth!" etc. This gentleman's name was M. Bamatabois. The woman, a rueful, bedizened spectre, who was walking backward and forward upon the snow, did not answer him, did not even look at him, but continued her walk in silence and with a dismal regularity that brought her under his sarcasm every five minutes like the condemned soldier who, at stated periods, returns under the rods. This failure to secure attention doubtless piqued the loafer, who, taking advantage of the moment when she turned, came up behind her with a stealthy step and, stifling his laughter, stooped down, seized a handful of snow from the sidewalk and threw it hastily into her back between her naked shoulders. The girl roared with rage, turned, bounded like a panther, and rushed upon the man, burying her nails in his face, and using the most frightful words that ever fell from the offscouring of a guard-house. These insults were thrown out in a voice roughened by brandy, from a hideous mouth which lacked the two front teeth. It was Fantine.

At the noise which this made, the officers came out of the café, a crowd gathered, and a large circle was formed, laughing, jeering, and applauding around this centre of attraction, composed of two beings who could hardly be recognized as a man and a woman, the man defending himself, his hat knocked off, the woman kicking and striking, her head bare, shrieking, toothless, and without hair, livid with wrath and horrible.

Suddenly a tall man advanced quickly from the crowd, seized the woman by her muddy satin waist, and said: "Follow me!"

The woman raised her head; her furious voice died out

at once. Her eyes were glassy; from livid she had become pale, and she shuddered with a shudder of terror. She recognized Javert.

The dandy profited by this to steal away.

XIII

SOLUTION OF SOME QUESTIONS OF MUNICIPAL POLICE

JAVERT dismissed the bystanders, broke up the circle, and walked off rapidly toward the bureau of police, which is at the end of the square, dragging the poor creature after him. She made no resistance but followed mechanically. Neither spoke a word. The flock of spectators, in a paroxysm of joy, followed with their jokes. The deepest misery, an opportunity for obscenity.

When they reached the bureau of police, which was a low hall, warmed by a stove and guarded by a sentinel, with a grated window looking on the street, Javert opened the door, entered with Fantine and closed the door behind him, to the great disappointment of the curious crowd, who stood upon tiptoe and stretched their necks before the dirty window of the guard-house in their endeavors to see. Curiosity is a kind of glutton. To see is to devour.

On entering, Fantine crouched down in a corner, motionless and silent, like a frightened dog.

The sergeant of the guard placed a lighted candle on the table. Javert sat down, drew from his pocket a sheet of stamped paper and began to write.

These women are placed by our laws completely under the discretion of the police. They do what they will with them, punish them as they please, and confiscate at will those two sad things which they call their industry and their liberty. Javert was impassible; his grave face betrayed no emotion. He was, however, engaged in serious and earnest consideration. It was one of those moments in which he exercised without restraint, but with all the scruples of a strict conscience, his formidable discretionary power. At this moment he felt that his policeman's stool was a bench of justice. He was conducting a trial. He was trying and condemning. He called all the ideas of which his mind was capable around the grand thing that he was doing. The more he examined the conduct of

this girl the more he revolted at it. It was clear that he had seen a crime committed. He had seen, there in the street, society, represented by a property-holder and an elector, insulted and attacked by a creature who was an outlaw and an outcast. A prostitute had assaulted a citizen. He, Javert, had seen that himself. He wrote in silence.

When he had finished he signed his name, folded the paper and handed it to the sergeant of the guard, saying: "Take three men and carry this girl to jail." Then turning to Fantine: "You are in for six months."

The hapless woman shuddered.

"Six months! six months in prison!" cried she. "Six months to earn 7 sous a day! but what will become of Cosette! my daughter! my daughter! Why, I still owe more than 100 francs to the Thenardiers, M. l'Inspector, do you know that?"

She dragged herself along on the floor, dirtied by the muddy boots of these men, without rising, clasping her hands and moving rapidly on her knees.

"M. Javert," said she, "I beg your pity. I assure you that I was not in the wrong. If you had seen the beginning you would have seen. I swear to you by the good God that I was not in the wrong. That gentleman, whom I do not know, threw snow in my back. Have they the right to throw snow into our backs when we are going along quietly like that without doing any harm to anybody? That made me wild. I am not very well, you see! and then he had already been saying things to me for some time. 'You are homely!' 'You have no teeth!' I know too well that I have lost my teeth. I did not do anything. I thought: 'He is a gentleman who is amusing himself.' I was not immodest with him. I did not speak to him. It was then that he threw the snow at me. M. Javert, my good M. l'Inspector, was there no one there who saw it and can tell you that this is true? I perhaps did wrong to get angry. You know, at the first moment, we can not master ourselves. We are excitable. And then, to have something cold thrown into your back when you are not expecting it. I did wrong to spoil the gentleman's hat. Why has he gone away? I would ask his pardon. Oh! I would beg his pardon. Have pity on me now this

once, M. Javert. Stop, you don't know how it is; in the prisons they only earn 7 sous; that is not the fault of the Government, but they earn 7 sous, and just think that I have 100 francs to pay, or else they will turn away my little one. Oh, my God! I can not have her with me. What I do is so vile! Oh, my Cosette! Oh, my little angel of the good Blessed Virgin, what will she become, poor famished child! I tell you the Thenardiers are innkeepers, boors; they have no consideration. They must have money. Do not put me in prison! Do you see, she is a little one that they would put out on the highway, to do what she can, in the very heart of winter, and you must feel pity for such a thing, good M. Javert. If she were older she could earn her living, but she can not at such an age. I am not a bad woman at heart. It is not laziness and appetite that have brought me to this. I have drunk brandy, but it was from misery. I do not like it, but it stupefies. When I was happier one would only have had to look into my wardrobe to see that I was not a disorderly woman. I had linen, much linen. Have pity on me, M. Javert."

She talked thus, bent double, shaken with sobs, blinded by tears, her neck bare, clinching her hands, coughing with a dry and short cough, stammering very feebly with an agonized voice. Great grief is a divine and terrible radiance which transfigures the wretched. At that moment Fantine had again become beautiful. At certain instants she stopped and tenderly kissed the policeman's coat. She would have softened a heart of granite, but you can not soften a heart of wood.

"Come!" said Javert, "I have heard you. Haven't you got through? March off at once—you have your six months; the Eternal Father in person could do nothing for you."

At those solemn words: "*The Eternal Father in person could do nothing for you,*" she understood that her sentence was fixed. She sank down, murmuring: "Mercy!"

Javert turned his back.

The soldiers seized her by the arms.

A few minutes before a man had entered without being noticed. He had closed the door and stood with his back against it, and heard the despairing supplications of Fantine.

When the soldiers put their hands upon the wretched being, who would not rise, he stepped forward out of the shadow and said: "One moment, if you please!"

Javert raised his eyes and recognized M. Madeleine. He took off his hat and bowing with a sort of angry awkwardness: "Pardon, M. l'Mayor—"

This word, M. l'Mayor, had a strange effect upon Fantine. She sprang to her feet at once, like a spectre from the ground, pushed back the soldiers with her arms, walked straight to M. Madeleine before they could stop her, and, gazing at him fixedly with a wild look, she exclaimed: "Ah! it is you, then, who are M. l'Mayor!"

Then she burst out laughing and spit in his face.

M. Madeleine wiped his face and said: "Inspector Javert, set this woman at liberty."

Javert felt as though he was on the point of losing his senses. He experienced, at that moment, blow on blow, and almost simultaneously, the most violent emotions that he had known in his life. To see a woman of the town spit in the face of a mayor was a thing so monstrous that in his most daring suppositions he would have thought it sacrilege to believe it possible. On the other hand, deep down in his thought, he dimly brought into hideous association what this woman was and what this mayor might be, and then he perceived with horror something indescribably simple in this prodigious assault. But when he saw this mayor, this magistrate, wipe his face quietly and say "*set this woman at liberty*," he was stupefied with amazement; thought and speech alike failed him; the sum of possible astonishment had been overpassed. He remained speechless.

The mayor's words were not less strange a blow to Fantine. She raised her bare arm and clung to the damper of the stove as if she were staggered. Meanwhile, she looked all around, and began to talk in a low voice, as if speaking to herself: "At liberty! they let me go! I am not to go to prison for six months! Who was it said that? It is not possible that anybody said that. I misunderstood. That can not be this monster of a mayor! Was it you, my good M. Javert, who told them to set me at liberty? Oh, look now! I will tell you and you will let me go. This monster of a mayor, this old whelp of a mayor, he is the cause of

all this. Think of it, M. Javert, he turned me away on account of a parcel of beggars who told stories in the workshop. Was not that horrible? To turn away a poor girl who does her work honestly! Since that I could not earn enough, and all the wretchedness has come. To begin with, there is a change that you gentlemen of the police ought to make—that is, to stop prison contractors from wronging poor people. I will tell you how it is. Listen. You earn 12 sous at shirt-making, that falls to 9 sous, not enough to live. Then we must do what we can. For me, I had my little Cosette, and I had to be a bad woman, You see now it is this beggar of a mayor who has done all this, and then I did stamp on his hat in front of the officers' café. But he—he had spoiled my whole dress with the snow. We women—we have only one silk dress for evening. See, you, I have never meant to do wrong, in truth, M. Javert, and I see everywhere much worse women than I am who are much more fortunate. Oh, M. Javert, it is you who said that they must let me go, is it not? Go and inquire, speak to my landlord; I pay my rent, and he will surely tell you that I am honest. Oh, dear, I beg your pardon, I have touched—I did not know it—the damper of the stove, and it smokes."

M. Madeleine listened with profound attention. While she was talking, he had fumbled in his waistcoat, had taken out his purse and opened it. It was empty. He had put it back into his pocket. He said to Fantine: "How much did you say that you owed?"

Fantine, who had only looked at Javert, turned toward him: "Who said anything to you?"

Then addressing herself to the soldiers: "Say, now, did you see how I spit in his face? Oh! you old scoundrel of a mayor, you come here to frighten me, but I am not afraid of you. I am afraid of M. Javert. I am afraid of my good M. Javert!"

As she said this she turned again toward the inspector: "Now, you see, M. l'Inspector, you must be just. I know that you are just, M. l'Inspector; in fact, it is very simple, a man who jocosely throws a little snow into a woman's back, that makes them laugh, the officers, they must divert themselves with something, and we poor things are only for their amusement. And then you come—you come, you

are obliged to keep order, you arrest the woman who has done wrong, but on reflection, as you are good, you tell them to set me at liberty, that is for my little one, because six months in prison, that would prevent my supporting my child. Only never come back again, wretch! Oh, I will never come back again, M. Javert! They may do anything they like with me now, I will not stir. Only to-day, you see, I cried out because that hurt me. I did not in the least expect that snow from that gentleman, and, then, I have told you, I am not very well; I cough, I have something in my chest like a ball, which burns me, and the doctor tells me: 'Be careful!' Stop, feel, give me your hand, don't be afraid, here it is."

She wept no more; her voice was caressing; she placed Javert's great coarse hand upon her white and delicate chest, and looked at him, smiling.

Suddenly she hastily adjusted the disorder of her garments, smoothed down the folds of her dress, which, in dragging herself about, had been raised almost as high as her knees, and walked toward the door, saying in an undertone to the soldiers, with a friendly nod of the head: "Boys, M. l'Inspector said that you must release me; I am going."

She put her hand upon the latch. One more step and she would be in the street.

Javert until that moment had remained standing motionless, his eyes fixed on the ground, looking, in the midst of the scene, like a statue which was waiting to be placed in position.

The sound of the latch roused him. He raised his head with an expression of sovereign authority—an expression all the more frightful in proportion as power is vested in beings of lower grade; ferocious in the wild beast, atrocious in the undeveloped man.

"Sergeant," exclaimed he, "don't you see that this vagabond is going off? Who told you to let her go?"

"I," said Madeleine.

At the words of Javert, Fantine had trembled and dropped the latch, as a thief, who is caught, drops what he has stolen. When Madeleine spoke she turned, and from that moment, without saying a word, without even daring to breathe freely, she looked by turns from Madeleine to

Javert and from Javert to Madeleine, as the one or the other was speaking.

It was clear that Javert must have been, as they say, "thrown off his balance," or he would not have allowed himself to address the sergeant as he did, after the direction of the mayor to set Fantine at liberty. Had he forgotten the presence of the mayor? Had he finally decided within himself that it was impossible for "an authority" to give such an order, and that very certainly the mayor must have said one thing and meant another? Or, in view of the enormities which he had witnessed for the last two hours, did he say to himself that it was necessary to revert to extreme measures, that it was necessary for the little to make itself great, for the detective to transform himself into a magistrate, for the policeman to become a judge, and that in this fearful extremity, order, law, morality, government, society as a whole, were personified in him, Javert!

However this might be, when M. Madeleine pronounced that I, which we have just heard, the inspector of police, Javert, turned toward the mayor, pale, cold, with blue lips, a desperate look, his whole body agitated with an imperceptible tremor, and, an unheard-of thing, said to him with a downcast look, but a firm voice: "M. l'Mayor, that can not be done."

"Why?" said M. Madeleine.

"This wretched woman has insulted a citizen."

"Inspector Javert," replied M. Madeleine, in a conciliating and calm tone, "listen. You are an honest man and I have no objection to explain myself to you. The truth is this. I was passing through the square when you arrested this woman; there was a crowd still there; I learned the circumstances; I know all about it; it is the citizen who was in the wrong, and who, by a faithful police, would have been arrested."

Javert went on: "This wretch has just insulted M. l'Mayor."

"That concerns me," said M. Madeleine. "The insult to me rests with myself, perhaps. I can do what I please about it."

"I beg M. l'Mayor's pardon. The insult rests not with him, it rests with justice."

"Inspector Javert," replied M. Madeleine, "the highest

justice is conscience. I have heard this woman. I know what I am doing."

"And for my part, M. l'Mayor, I do not know what I am seeing."

"Then content yourself with obeying."

"I obey my duty. My duty requires that this woman spend six months in prison."

M. Madeleine answered mildly: "Listen to this. She shall not a day."

At these decisive words Javert had the boldness to look the mayor in the eye and said, but still in a tone of profound respect: "I am very sorry to resist M. l'Mayor; it is the first time in my life, but he will deign to permit me to observe that I am within the limits of my own authority. I will speak, since the mayor desires it, on the matter of the citizen. I was there. This girl fell upon M. Bamatabois, who is an elector and the owner of that fine house with a balcony, that stands at the corner of the esplanade, three stories high, and all of hewn stone. Indeed, there are some things in this world which must be considered. However that may be, M. l'Mayor, this matter belongs to the police of the streets; that concerns me and I detain the woman Fantine."

At this M. Madeleine folded his arms and said in a severe tone which nobody in the city had ever yet heard: "The matter of which you speak belongs to the municipal police. By the terms of articles nine, eleven, fifteen, and sixty-six of the code of criminal law I am the judge of it. I order that this woman be set at liberty."

Javert endeavored to make a last attempt.

"But, M. l'Mayor—"

"I refer you to article eighty-one of the law of December 13, 1799, upon illegal imprisonment."

"M. l'Mayor, permit—"

"Not another word."

"However—"

"Retire," said M. Madeleine.

Javert received the blow standing, in front, and with open breast like a Russian soldier. He bowed to the ground before the mayor and went out.

Fantine stood by the door and looked at him with stupor as he passed before her.

Meanwhile she also was the subject of a strange revolution. She had seen herself somehow disputed about by two opposing powers. She had seen struggling before her very eyes two men who held in their hands her liberty, her life, her soul, her child; one of these men was drawing her to the side of darkness, the other was leading her toward the light. In this contest, seen with distortion through the magnifying power of fright, these two men had appeared to her like two giants; one spoke as her demon, the other as her good angel. The angel had vanquished the demon, and the thought of it made her shudder from head to foot; this angel, this deliverer, was precisely the man whom she abhorred, this mayor whom she had so long considered as the author of all her woes, this Madeleine! and at the very moment she had insulted him in a hideous fashion he had saved her! Had she, then, been deceived? Ought she, then, to change her whole heart? She did not know—she trembled. She listened with dismay, she looked around with alarm, and at each word that M. Madeleine uttered, she felt the fearful darkness of her hatred melt within and flow away, while there was born in her heart an indescribable and unspeakable warmth of joy, of confidence, and of love.

When Javert was gone, M. Madeleine turned toward her and said to her, speaking slowly and with difficulty, like a man who is struggling that he may not weep: "I have heard you. I knew nothing of what you have said. I believe that it is true. I did not even know that you had left my workshop. Why did you not apply to me? But now; I will pay your debts, I will have your child come to you, or you shall go to her. You shall live here, at Paris, or where you will. I take charge of your child and you. You shall do no more work if you do not wish to. I will give you all the money that you need. You shall again become honest in again becoming happy. More than that —listen. I declare to you from this moment, if all is as you say, and I do not doubt it, that you have never ceased to be virtuous and holy before God. Oh, poor woman!"

This was more than poor Fantine could bear. To have Cosette! to leave this infamous life! to live free, rich, happy, honest, with Cosette! to see suddenly spring up in the midst of her misery all these realities of paradise! She

looked as if she were stupefied at the man who was speaking to her, and could only pour out two or three sobs: "Oh! oh! oh!" Her limbs gave way, she threw herself on her knees before M. Madeleine, and before he could prevent it he felt that she had seized his hand and carried it to her lips.

Then she fainted.

BOOK SIXTH—JAVERT

I

THE BEGINNING OF THE REST

M. MADELEINE had Fantine taken to the infirmary, which was in his own house. He confided her to the sisters, who put her to bed. A violent fever came on and she passed a part of the night in delirious ravings. Finally, she fell asleep.

Toward noon the following day Fantine awoke. She heard a breathing near her bed, drew aside the curtain, and saw M. Madeleine standing gazing at something above his head. His look was full of compassionate and supplicating agony. She followed its direction, and saw that it was fixed upon a crucifix nailed against the wall.

From that moment M. Madeleine was transfigured in the eyes of Fantine; he seemed to her clothed upon with light. He was absorbed in a kind of prayer. She gazed at him for a long while without daring to interrupt him; at last she said, timidly: "What are you doing?"

M. Madeleine had been in that place for an hour waiting for Fantine to awake. He took her hand, felt her pulse, and said: "How do you feel?"

"Very well. I have slept," she said. "I think I am getting better—this will be nothing."

Then he said, answering the question she had first asked him, as if she had just asked it:

"I was praying to the martyr who is on high."

And in his thoughts he added: "For the martyr who is here below."

M. Madeleine had passed the night and morning in in-

forming himself about Fantine. He knew all now; he had learned, even in all its poignant details, the history of Fantine.

He went on: "You have suffered greatly, poor mother. Oh! do not lament, you have now the portion of the elect. It is in this way that mortals become angels. It is not their fault; they do not know how to set about it otherwise. This hell from which you have come out is the first step toward heaven. We must begin by that."

He sighed deeply, but she smiled with a sublime smile from which two teeth were gone.

That same night Javert wrote a letter. Next morning he carried this letter himself to the post-office of M—— sur M——. It was directed to Paris and bore this address: "To M. Chabouillet, Secretary of M. l'Prefect of Police."

As the affair of the bureau of police had been noised about, the postmistress and some others who saw the letter before it was sent, and who recognized Javert's handwriting in the address, thought he was sending in his resignation.

M. Madeleine wrote immediately to the Thenardiers. Fantine owed them 120 francs; he sent them 300 francs, telling them to pay themselves out of it and bring the child at once to M—— sur M——, where her mother, who was sick, wanted her.

This astonished Thenardier.

"The devil!" he said to his wife, "we won't let go of the child. It may be that this lark will become a milch cow. I guess some silly fellow has been smitten by the mother."

He replied by a bill of 500 and some odd francs, carefully drawn up. In this bill figured two incontestable items for upward of 300 francs, one of a physician and the other of an apothecary who had attended and supplied Eponine and Azelma during two long illnesses. Cosette, as we have said, had not been ill. This was only a slight substitution of names. Thenardier wrote at the bottom of the bill: "Received on account 300 francs."

M. Madeleine immediately sent 300 francs more, and wrote: "Make haste to bring Cosette."

"Cristy," said Thenardier, "we won't let go of the girl."

Meanwhile Fantine had not recovered. She still remained in the infirmary.

It was not without some repugnance, at first, that the sisters received and cared for "this girl." He who has seen the bass-reliefs at Rheims will recall the distension of the lower lip of the wise virgins beholding the foolish virgins. This ancient contempt of vestals for less fortunate women is one of the deepest instincts of womanly dignity; the sisters had experienced it with the intensification of religion. But in a few days Fantine had disarmed them. The motherly tenderness within her, with her soft and touching words, moved them. One day the sisters heard her say in her delirium: "I have been a sinner, but when I shall have my child with me, that will mean that God has pardoned me. While I was bad I would not have had my Cosette with me; I could not have borne her sad and surprised looks. It was for her I sinned, and that is why God forgives me. I shall feel this benediction when Cosette comes. I shall gaze upon her; the sight of her innocence will do me good. She knows nothing of it at all. She is an angel, you see, my sisters. At her age the wings have not yet fallen."

M. Madeleine came to see her twice a day, and at each visit she asked him: "Shall I see my Cosette soon?"

He answered: "Perhaps to-morrow. I expect her every moment."

And the mother's pale face would brighten.

"Ah," she would say, "how happy I shall be."

We have just said she did not recover; on the contrary, her condition seemed to become worse from week to week. That handful of snow applied to the naked skin between her shoulder-blades had caused a sudden check of perspiration, in consequence of which the disease, which had been forming for some years, at last attacked her violently. They were just at that time beginning in the diagnosis and treatment of lung diseases to follow the fine theory of Laennec. The doctor sounded her lungs and shook his head.

M. Madeleine said to him: "Well?"

"Has she not a child she is anxious to see?" said the doctor.

"Yes."

"Well, then, make haste to bring her."

M. Madeleine gave a shudder.

Fantine asked him: "What did the doctor say?"

M. Madeleine tried to smile.

"He told us to bring your child at once. That will restore your health."

"Oh!" she cried, "he is right. But what is the matter with these Thenardiers that they keep my Cosette from me? Oh! she is coming! Here at last I see happiness near me."

The Thenardiers, however, did not "let go of the child"; they gave a hundred bad reasons. Cosette was too delicate to travel in the winter time, and then there were a number of little petty debts, of which they were collecting the bills, etc.

"I will send somebody for Cosette," said M. Madeleine, "if necessary, I will go myself."

He wrote, at Fantine's dictation, this letter, which she signed:

M. Thenardier:
You will deliver Cosette to the bearer.
He will settle all small debts.
I have the honor to salute you with consideration. FANTINE.

In the meanwhile a serious matter intervened. In vain we chisel as best we can the mysterious block of which our life is made, the black vein of destiny reappears continually.

II

HOW JEAN CAN BECOME CHAMP

ONE morning M. Madeleine was in his office arranging for some pressing business of the mayoralty, in case he should decide to go to Montfermeil himself, when he was informed that Javert, the inspector of the police, wished to speak with him. On hearing his name spoken M. Madeleine could not repress a disagreeable impression. Since the affair of the bureau of police Javert had more than ever avoided him, and M. Madeleine had not seen him at all.

"Let him come in," said he.

Javert entered.

M. Madeleine remained seated near the fire, looking

over a bundle of papers upon which he was making notes, and which contained the returns of the police patrol. He did not disturb himself at all for Javert; he could not but think of poor Fantine, and it was fitting that he should receive him very coldly.

Javert respectfully saluted the mayor, who had his back toward him. The mayor did not look up, but continued to make notes on the papers.

Javert advanced a few steps and paused without breaking silence.

A physiognomist, had he been familiar with Javert's face, had he made a study for years of this savage in the service of civilization; this odd mixture of the Roman, Spartan, monk, and corporal; this spy, incapable of a lie; this virgin detective—a phyisognomist, had he known his secret and inveterate aversion for M. Madeleine, his contest with the mayor on the subject of Fantine, and had he seen Javert at that moment, would have said: "What has happened to him?"

It was evident to any one who had known this conscientious, straightforward, clear, sincere, upright, austere, fierce man, that Javert had suffered some great interior commotion. There was nothing in his mind that was not depicted on his face. He was, like all violent people, subject to sudden changes. Never had his face been stranger or more startling. On entering he had bowed before M. Madeleine with a look in which was neither rancor, anger, nor defiance; he paused some steps behind the mayor's chair, and was now standing in a soldierly attitude with the natural, cold rudeness of a man who was never kind, but had always been patient; he waited without speaking a word or making a motion, in genuine humility and tranquil resignation, until it should please M. l'Mayor to turn toward him, calm, serious, hat in hand, and eyes cast down with an expression between that of a soldier before his officer and a prisoner before his judge. All the feeling as well as all the remembrances which we should have expected him to have disappeared. Nothing was left upon this face, simple and impenetrable as granite, except a gloomy sadness. His whole person expressed abasement and firmness, an indescribably courageous dejection.

At last the mayor laid down his pen and turned partly round: "Well, what is it? What is the matter, Javert?"

Javert remained silent a moment as if collecting himself; then raised his voice with a sad solemnity which did not, however, exclude simplicity: "There has been a criminal act committed, M. l'Mayor."

"What act?"

"An inferior agent of the Government has been wanting in respect to a magistrate, in the gravest manner. I come, as my duty, to bring the fact to your knowledge."

"Who is this agent?" asked M. Madeleine.

"I," said Javert.

"You?"

"I."

"And who is the magistrate who has to complain of this agent?"

"You, M. l'Mayor."

M. Madeleine straightened himself in his chair. Javert continued with serious looks and eyes still cast down.

"M. l'Mayor, I come to ask you to be so kind as to make charges and procure my dismissal."

M. Madeleine, amazed, opened his mouth. Javert interrupted him: "You will say that I might tender my resignation, but that is not enough. To resign is honorable; I have done wrong. I ought to be punished. I must be dismissed."

And after a pause he added: "M. l'Mayor, you were severe to me the other day, unjustly. Be justly so to-day."

"Ah, indeed! why? What is all this nonsense? What does it all mean? What is the criminal act committed by you against me? What have you done to me? How have you wronged me? You accuse yourself. Do you wish to be relieved?"

"Dismissed," said Javert.

"Dismissed it is, then. It is very strange. I do not understand you."

"You will understand, M. l'Mayor." Javert sighed deeply, and continued sadly and coldly: "M. l'Mayor, six weeks ago, after that scene about that girl I was enraged and I denounced you."

"Denounced me?"

"To the prefecture of police at Paris."

M. Madeleine, who did not laugh much oftener than Javert, began to laugh: "As a mayor having encroached upon the police?"

"As a former convict."

The mayor became livid.

Javert, who had not raised his eyes, exclaimed: "I believed it. For a long while I had had suspicions. A resemblance, information you obtained at Faverolles, your immense strength; the affair of old Fauchelevent; your skill as a marksman; your leg which drags a little—and, in fact, I don't know what other stupidities; but at last I took you for a man named Jean Valjean."

"Named what? How did you call that name?"

"Jean Valjean. He was a convict I saw twenty years ago, when I was adjutant of the galley guard at Toulon. After leaving the galleys this Valjean, it appears, robbed a bishop's palace, then he committed another robbery with weapons in his hands, in a highway, on a little Savoyard, For eight years his whereabout has been unknown, and search has been made for him. I fancied—in short, I have done this thing. Anger determined me, and I denounced you to the prefect."

M. Madeleine, who had taken up the file of papers again, a few minutes before, said with a tone of perfect indifference, "And what answer did you get?"

"That I was crazy."

"Well!"

"Well; they were right."

"It is fortunate that you think so!"

"It must be so, for the real Jean Valjean has been found."

The paper that M. Madeleine held fell from his hand; he raised his head, looked steadily at Javert, and said in an inexpressible tone: "Ah!"

Javert continued: "I will tell you how it is, M. l'Mayor. There was, it appears, in the country, near Ailly-le-Haut Clocher, a simple sort of fellow who was called Father Champmathieu. He was very poor. Nobody paid any attention to him. Such folks live, one hardly knows how. Finally, this last fall, Father Champmathieu was arrested for stealing cider apples from ——, but that is of no consequence. There was a theft, a wall scaled, branches of

trees broken. Our Champmathieu was arrested; he had even then a branch of an apple-tree in his hand. The rogue was caged. So far, it was nothing more than a penitentiary matter. But here comes in the hand of Providence. The jail being in bad condition, the police justice thought it best to take him to Arras, where the prison of the department is. In this prison at Arras there was a former convict named Brevet, who is there for some trifle, and who, for his good conduct, had been made turnkey. No sooner was Champmathieu set down than Brevet cried out: 'Ha, ha! I know that man. He is a *fagot*.' *

" 'Look up here, my good man. You are Jean Valjean.' 'Jean Valjean!' Champmathieu plays off the astonished. 'Don't play ignorance,' said Brevet. 'You are Jean Valjean; you were in the galleys at Toulon. It is twenty years ago. We were there together.' Champmathieu denied it all. Faith! you understand; they fathomed it. The case was worked up and this was what they found. Champmathieu, thirty years ago, was a pruner in divers places, particularly in Faverolles. There we lose trace of him. A long time afterward we find him at Auvergne; then at Paris, where he is said to have been a wheelwright and to have had a daughter—a washerwoman—but that is not proved, and finally in this part of the country. Now, before going to the galleys for burglary, what was Jean Valjean? A pruner. Where? At Faverolles. Another fact. This Valjean's baptismal name was Jean; his mother's family name Mathieu. Nothing could be more natural, on leaving the galleys, than to take his mother's name to disguise himself; then he would be called Jean Mathieu. He goes to Auvergne, the pronunciation of that region would make *Chan* of *Jean*—they would call him Chan Mathieu. Our man adopts it, and now you have him transformed into Champmathieu. You follow me, do you not? Search has been made at Faverolles; the family of Jean Valjean are no longer there. Nobody knows where they are. You know in such classes these disappearances of families often occur. You search, but can find nothing. Such people, when they are not mud, are dust. And then, as the commencement of this story dates back thirty years,

* Former convict.

there is nobody now at Faverolles who knew Jean Valjean. But search has been made at Toulon. Besides Brevet there are only two convicts who have seen Jean Valjean. They are convicts for life; their names are Cochepaille and Chenildieu. These men were brought from the galleys and confronted with the pretended Champmathieu. They did not hesitate. To them as well as to Brevet it was Jean Valjean. Same age; fifty-four years old; same height; same appearance, in fact, the same man; it is he. At this time it was that I sent my denunciation to the prefecture at Paris. They replied that I was out of my mind, and that Jean Valjean was at Arras in the hands of justice. You may imagine how that astonished me; I who believed that I had here the same Jean Valjean. I wrote to the justice; he sent for me and brought Champmathieu before me."

"Well," interrupted M. Madeleine.

Javert replied with an incorruptible and sad face: "M. l'Mayor, truth is truth. I am sorry for it, but that man is Jean Valjean. I recognized him also."

M. Madeleine said in a very low voice: "Are you sure?"

Javert began to laugh with the suppressed laugh which indicates profound conviction.

"I'm sure!"

He remained a moment in thought, mechanically taking up pinches of powdered wood used to dry ink, from the box on the table, and then added: "And now that I see the real Jean Valjean, I do not understand how I ever could have believed anything else. I beg your pardon, M. l'Mayor."

In uttering the serious and supplicating words to him, who six weeks before had humiliated him before the entire guard, and said, "Retire!" Javert, this haughty man, was unconsciously full of simplicity and dignity. M. Madeleine answered his request by the abrupt question: "And what did the man say?"

"Oh, bless me! M. l'Mayor, the affair is a bad one. If it is Jean Valjean it is a second offence. To climb a wall, break a branch, and take apples, for a child is only a trespass; for a man it is a misdemeanor; for a convict it is a crime. Scaling a wall and theft includes everything. It is not a case for a police court, but for the assizes. It is

not a few days' imprisonment, but the galleys for life. And then there is the affair of the little Savoyard, who I hope will be found. The devil! There is something to struggle against, is there not? There would be for anybody but Jean Valjean. But Jean Valjean is a sly fellow. And that is just where I recognize him. Anybody else would know that he was in a hot place, and would rave and cry out, as the tea-kettle sings on the fire; he would say that he was not Jean Valjean, etc. But this man pretends not to understand: he says: 'I am Champmathieu; I have no more to say.' He puts on an appearance of astonishment; he plays the brute. Oh, the rascal is cunning! But it is all the same, there is the evidence. Four persons have recognized him, and the old villain will be condemned. It has been taken to the assizes at Arras. I am going to testify. I have been summoned."

M. Madeleine had turned again to his desk, and was quietly looking over his papers, reading and writing alternately, like a man pressed with business. He turned again toward Javert.

"That will do, Javert. Indeed all these details interest me very little. We are wasting time, and we have urgent business, Javert; go at once to the house of the good woman, Buseaupied, who sells herbs at the corner of Rue St. Saulve; tell her to make her complaint against the carman Pierre Chesnelong. He is a brutal fellow; he almost crushed this woman and her child. He must be punished. Then you will go to M. Charcellay, Rue Montre-de-Champigny. He complains that the gutter of the next house, when it rains, throws water upon his house and is undermining the foundation. Then you will inquire into the offences that have been reported to me, at the widow Doris's, Rue Guibourg, and Mme. Renée le Bossé's, Rue du Garraud Blanc, and make out reports. But I am giving you too much to do. Did you not tell me you were going to Arras in eight or ten days on this matter?"

"Sooner than that, M. l'Mayor."

"What day, then?"

"I think I told monsieur that the case would be tried to-morrow, and that I should leave by the diligence to-night."

M. Madeleine made an imperceptible motion.

"And how long will the matter last?"

"One day at longest. Sentence will be pronounced at latest to-morrow evening. But I shall not wait for the sentence, which is certain; as soon as my testimony is given I shall return here."

"Very well," said M. Madeleine.

And he dismissed him with a wave of his hand.

Javert did not go.

"Your pardon, monsieur," said he.

"What more is there?" asked M. Madeleine.

"M. l'Mayor, there is one thing more to which I desire to call your attention."

"What is it?"

"It is that I ought to be dismissed."

M. Madeleine arose.

"Javert, you are a man of honor and I esteem you. You exaggerate your fault. Besides, this is an offence which concerns me. You are worthy of promotion rather than disgrace. I desire you to keep your place."

Javert looked at M. Madeleine with his calm eyes, in whose depths it seemed that one beheld his conscience, unenlightened, but stern and pure, and said in a tranquil voice: "M. l'Mayor, I can not agree to that."

"I repeat," said M. Madeleine, "that this matter concerns me."

But Javert, with his one idea, continued: "As to exaggerating, I do not exaggerate. This is the way I reason. I have unjustly suspected you. That is nothing. It is our province to suspect, although it may be an abuse of our right to suspect our superiors. But without proofs and in a fit of anger, with revenge as my aim, I denounced you as a convict—you, a respectable man, a mayor and a magistrate. This is a serious matter, very serious. I have committed an offence against authority in your person, I who am the agent of authority. If one of my subordinates had done what I have, I would have pronounced him unworthy of the service and sent him away. Well, listen a moment, M. l'Mayor; I have often been severe in my life toward others. It was just. I did right. Now, if I were not severe toward myself, all I have justly done would become injustice. Should I spare myself more than others? No. What! if I should be prompt only to punish others

and not myself, I should be a wretch indeed! They who say: 'That blackguard, Javert,' would be right. M. l'Mayor, I do not wish you to treat me with kindness. Your kindness, when it was for others, enraged me; I do not wish it for myself. That kindness which consists in defending a woman of the town against a citizen, a police against the mayor, the inferior against the superior, that is what I call ill-judged kindness. Such kindness disorganizes society. Good God! it is easy to be kind; the difficulty is to be just. Had you been what I thought I should not have been kind to you; not I. You would have seen, M. l'Mayor. I ought to treat myself as I should treat anybody else. When I put down malefactors, when I rigorously brought up offenders, I often said to myself: 'You, if you ever trip, if ever I catch you doing wrong, look out!' I have tripped. I have caught myself doing wrong. So much the worse! I must be sent away, broken, dismissed—that is right. I have hands; I can till the ground. It is all the same to me. M. l'Mayor, the good of the service demands an example. I simply ask the dismissal of Inspector Javert."

All this was said in a tone of proud humility, a desperate and resolute tone, which gave an indescribably whimsical grandeur to the oddly honest man.

"We will see," said M. Madeleine.

And he held out his hand to him.

"Pardon, M. l'Mayor, that should not be. A mayor does not give his hand to a spy."

He added between his teeth: "Spy, yes; from the moment I abused the power of my position I have been nothing better than a spy!"

Then he bowed profoundly and went toward the door.

There he turned around: his eyes yet downcast.

"M. l'Mayor, I will continue in the service until I am relieved."

He went out. M. Madeleine sat musing, listening to his firm and resolute step as it died away along the corridor.

BOOK SEVENTH—THE CHAMPMATHIEU AFFAIR

I

SISTER SIMPLICE

THE events which follow were never all known at M—— sur M——. But the few which did leak out have left such memories in that city that it would be a serious omission in this book if we did not relate them in their minutest details.

Among these details the reader will meet with two or three improbable circumstances, which we preserve from respect for the truth.

In the afternoon following the visit of Javert M. Madeleine went to see Fantine as usual.

Before going to Fantine's room he sent for Sister Simplice.

The two nuns who attended the infirmary, Lazarists, as all these sisters of charity are, were called Sister Perpétue and Sister Simplice.

Sister Perpétue was an ordinary village girl, summarily become a sister of charity, who entered the service of God as she would have entered service anywhere. She was a nun as others are cooks. This type is not very rare. The monastic orders gladly accept this heavy peasant clay, easily shaped into a Capuchine or an Ursuline. Such rustics are useful for the coarser duties of devotion. There is no shock in the transition from a cowboy to a Carmelite; the one becomes the other without much labor; the common basis of ignorance of a village and a cloister is a ready-made preparation, and puts the rustic at once upon an even footing with the monk. Enlarge the smock a little and you have a frock. Sister Perpétue was a stout nun from Marines, near Pontoise, given to patois, psalm-singing and muttering, sugaring a nostrum according to the bigotry or hypocrisy of the patient, treating invalids harshly, rough with the dying, almost throwing them into

the face of God, belaboring the death agony with angry prayers, bold, honest, and florid.

Sister Simplice was white with a waxen clearness.. In comparison with Sister Perpétue she was a sacramental taper by the side of a tallow-candle. St. Vincent de Paul has divinely drawn the figure of a sister of charity in these admirable words, in which he unites so much liberty with so much servitude: "Her only convent shall be the house of sickness; her only cell a hired lodging; her chapel the parish church; her cloister the streets of the city or the wards of the hospital; her only wall obedience; her grate the fear of God; her veil modesty." This ideal was made alive in Sister Simplice. No one could have told Sister Simplice's age; she had never been young, and seemed as if she never should be old. She was a person—we dare not say a woman—gentle, austere, companionable, cold, and who had never told a lie. She was so gentle that she appeared fragile; but, on the contrary, she was more enduring than granite. She touched the unfortunate with charming fingers, delicate and pure. There was, so to say, silence in her speech; she said just what was necessary, and she had a tone of voice which would at the same time have edified a confessional and enchanted a drawing-room. This delicacy accommodated itself to the serge dress, finding in its harsh touch a continual reminder of heaven and of God. Let us dwell upon one circumstance. Never to have lied, never to have spoken, for any purpose whatever, even carelessly, a single word which was not the truth, the sacred truth, was the distinctive trait of Sister Simplice; it was the mark of her virtue. She was almost celebrated in the congregation for this imperturbable veracity. The Abbé Sicard speaks of Sister Simplice in a letter to the deaf mute, Massieu. Sincere and pure as we may be, we all have the mark of some little lie upon our truthfulness. She had none. A little lie, an innocent lie, can such a thing exist? To lie is the absolute of evil. To lie a little is not possible; he who lies lies a whole lie; lying is the very face of the demon. Satan has two names; he is called Satan and he is called the liar. Such were her thoughts. And as she thought she practiced. From this resulted that whiteness of which we have spoken, a whiteness that covered with its radiance even her lips and her eyes. Her

smile was white, her look was white. There was not a spider's web, not a speck of dust upon the glass of that conscience. When she took the vows of St. Vincent de Paul she had taken the name of Simplice by especial choice. Simplice of Sicily, it is well known, is that saint who preferred to have both her breasts torn out rather than answer, having been born at Syracuse, that she was born at Segesta, a lie which would have saved her. This patron saint was fitting for this soul.

Sister Simplice, on entering the order, had two faults, of which she corrected herself gradually; she had had a taste for delicacies and loved to receive letters. Now she read nothing but a prayer-book in large type and in Latin. She did not understand Latin, but she understood the book.

The pious woman had conceived an affection for Fantine, perceiving in her probably some latent virtue, and had devoted herself almost exclusively to her care.

M. Madeleine took Sister Simplice aside and recommended Fantine to her with a singular emphasis, which the sister remembered at a later day.

On leaving the sister he approached Fantine.

Fantine awaited each day the appearance of M. Madeleine as one awaits a ray of warmth and of joy. She would say to the sisters: "I live only when the mayor is here."

That day she had more fever. As soon as she saw M. Madeleine she asked him: "Cosette?"

He answered with a smile: "Very soon."

M. Madeleine, while with Fantine, seemed the same as usual. Only he stayed an hour instead of half an hour, to the great satisfaction of Fantine. He made a thousand charges to everybody that the sick woman might want for nothing. It was noticed that at one moment his countenance became very sombre. But this was explained when it was known that the doctor had, bending close to his ear, said to him: "She is sinking fast."

Then he returned to the mayor's office, and the office boy saw him examine attentively a road-map of France which hung in his room. He made a few figures in pencil upon a piece of paper.

II

SHREWDNESS OF M. SCAUFFLAIRE

FROM the mayor's office he went to the outskirts of the city, to a Fleming's, M. Scaufflaer, Frenchified into Scaufflaire, who kept horses to let and "chaises if desired."

In order to go to Scaufflaire's, the nearest way was by a rarely frequented street, on which was the parsonage of the parish in which M. Madeleine lived. The curé was, it was said, a worthy and respectable man and a good counselor. At the moment when M. Madeleine arrived in front of the parsonage there was but one person passing in the street, and he remarked this; the mayor, after passing by the curé's house, stopped, stood still a moment, then turned back and retraced his steps as far as the door of the parsonage, which was a large door with an iron knocker. He seized the knocker quickly and raised it; then he stopped anew, stood a short time as if in thought, and after a few seconds, instead of letting the knocker fall smartly, he replaced it gently, and resumed his walk with a sort of haste that he had not shown before.

M. Madeleine found M. Scaufflaire at home busy repairing a harness.

"M. Scaufflaire," he asked, "have you a good horse?"

"M. l'Mayor," said the Fleming, "all my horses are good. What do you understand by a good horse?"

"A horse that can go twenty leagues in a day."

"The devil!" said the Fleming; "twenty leagues."

"Yes."

"Before a chaise?"

"Yes."

"And how long will he rest after the journey?"

"He must be able to start again the next day in case of need."

"To do the same thing again?"

"Yes."

"The devil! and it is twenty leagues?"

M. Madeleine drew from his pocket the paper on which he had penciled the figures. He showed them to the Fleming. They were the figures five, six, eight and a half.

"You see," said he. "Total, nineteen and a half, that is to say, twenty leagues."

"M. l'Mayor," resumed the Fleming, "I have just what you want. My little white horse—you must have seen him sometimes passing; he is a little beast from Bas-Boulonnais. He is full of fire. They tried at first to make a saddle-horse of him. Bah! he kicked, he threw everybody off. They thought he was vicious, they didn't know what to do. I bought him. I put him before a chaise. Monsieur, that is what he wanted; he is as gentle as a girl, he goes like the wind. But, for example, it won't do to get on his back. It's not his idea to be a saddle-horse. Everybody has his peculiar ambition. To draw but not to carry; we must believe that he has said that to himself."

"And he will make the trip?"

"Your twenty leagues, all the way at a full trot, and in less than eight hours. But there are some conditions."

"Name them."

"First, you must let him breathe an hour when you are half way; he will eat; and somebody must be by while he eats to prevent the tavern boy from stealing his oats; for I have noticed that at taverns oats are oftener drunk by the stable-boys than eaten by the horses."

"Somebody shall be there."

"Secondly—is the chaise for M. l'Mayor?"

"Yes."

"M. l'Mayor knows how to drive?"

"Yes."

"Well, M. l'Mayor will travel alone and without baggage, so as not to overload the horse."

"Agreed."

"But M. l'Mayor, having no one with him, will be obliged to undertake the trouble of seeing to the oats himself."

"So said."

"I must have thirty francs a day, the days he rests included. Not a penny less. And the fodder of the beast at the expense of M. l'Mayor."

M. Madeleine took three napoleons from his purse and laid them on the table.

"There is two days in advance."

"Fourthly, for such a trip, a chaise would be too heavy;

that would tire the horse. M. l'Mayor must consent to travel in a little tilbury that I have."

"I consent to that."

"It is light, but it is open."

"It is all the same to me."

"Has M. l'Mayor reflected that it is winter?"

M. Madeleine did not answer; the Fleming went on: "That it is very cold?"

M. Madeleine kept silence.

M. Scaufflaire continued: "That it may rain?"

M. Madeleine raised his head and said: "The horse and the tilbury will be before my door to-morrow at 4:30 in the morning."

"That is understood, M. l'Mayor," answered Scaufflaire. Then, scratching a stain on the top of the table with his thumb nail, he resumed with that careless air that the Flemings so well know how to associate with their shrewdness:

"Why, I have just thought of it! M. l'Mayor has not told me where he is going. Where is M. l'Mayor going?"

He had thought of nothing else since the beginning of the conversation, but without knowing why he had not dared to ask the question.

"Has your horse good forelegs?" said M. Madeleine.

"Yes, M. l'Mayor. You will hold him up a little going downhill. Is there much downhill between here and where you are going?"

"Don't forget to be at my door precisely at 4:30 o'clock in the morning," answered M. Madeleine, and he went out.

The Fleming was left "dumfounded," as he said himself some time afterward.

The mayor had been gone two or three minutes, when the door again opened; it was the mayor.

He had the same impassive and absent-minded air as ever.

"M. Scaufflaire," said he, "at what sum do you value the horse and the tilbury that you furnish me, the one carrying the other?"

"The one drawing the other, M. l'Mayor?" said the Fleming with a loud laugh.

"As you like. How much?"

"Does M. l'Mayor wish to buy them?"

"No, but, at all events, I wish to guarantee them to you. On my return you can give me back the amount. At how much do you value horse and chaise?"

"Five hundred francs, M. l'Mayor!"

"Here it is."

M. Madeleine placed a bank-note on the table, then went out, and this time did not return.

M. Scaufflaire regretted terribly that he had not said 1,000 francs. In fact, the horse and tilbury, in the lump, were worth 100 crowns.

The Fleming called his wife and related the affair to her. Where the deuce could the mayor be going? They talked it over. "He is going to Paris," said the wife. "I don't believe it," said the husband. M. Madeleine had forgotten the paper on which he had marked the figures and left it on the mantel. The Fleming seized it and studied it. Five, six, eight and a half? this must mean the relays of the post. He turned to his wife: "I have found it out." "How?" "It is five leagues from here to Hesdin. six from Hesdin to St. Pol, eight and a half from St. Pol to Arras. He is going to Arras."

Meanwhile M. Madeleine had reached home. To return from M. Scaufflaire's, he had taken a longer road, as if the door of the parsonage were a temptation to him, and he wished to avoid it. He went up to his room and shut himself in, which was nothing remarkable, for he usually went to bed early. However, the janitress of the factory, who was at the same time M. Madeleine's only servant, observed that his light was out at 8:30 o'clock, and she mentioned it to the cashier who came in, adding:

"Is M. l'Mayor sick? I thought that his manner was a little singular."

The cashier occupied a room situated exactly beneath M. Madeleine's. He paid no attention to the portress's words, went to bed and went to sleep. Toward midnight he suddenly awoke; he had heard, in his sleep, a noise overhead. He listened. It was a step that went and came, as if some one were walking in the room above. He listened more attentively and recognized M. Madeleine's step. That appeared strange to him; ordinarily no noise was made in M. Madeleine's room before his hour of rising. A moment afterward, the cashier heard something

that sounded like the opening and shutting of a wardrobe, then a piece of furniture was moved, there was another silence, and the step began again. The cashier rose up in bed, threw off his drowsiness, looked out, and through his window-panes saw upon an opposite wall the ruddy reflection of a lighted window. From the direction of the rays it could only be the window of M. Madeleine's chamber. The reflection trembled as if it came rather from a bright fire than from a light. The shadow of the sash could not be seen, which indicated that the window was wide open. Cold as it was, this open window was surprising. The cashier fell asleep again. An hour or two afterward he awoke again. The same step, slow and regular, was coming and going constantly over his head.

The reflection continued visible upon the wall, but it was now pale and steady like the light from a lamp or a candle. The window was still open.

Let us see what was passing in M. Madeleine's room.

III

A TEMPEST IN A BRAIN

THE reader has doubtless divined that M. Madeleine is none other than Jean Valjean.

We have already looked into the depths of that conscience; the time has come to look into them again. We do so not without emotion, nor without trembling. There exists nothing more terrific than this kind of contemplation. The mind's eye can nowhere find anything more dazzling nor more dark than in man; it can fix itself upon nothing which is more awful, more complex, more mysterious, or more infinite. There is one spectacle grander than the sea—that is the sky; there is one spectacle grander than the sky—that is the interior of the soul.

To write the poem of the human conscience, were it only of a single man, were it only of the most infamous of men, would be to swallow up all epics in a superior and final epic. The conscience is the chaos of chimeras, of lusts and of temptations, the furnace of dreams, the cave of the ideas which are our shame; it is the pandemonium of sophisms, the battlefield of the passions. At certain

hours penetrate within the livid face of a human being who reflects and look at what lies behind—look into that soul, look into that obscurity. There, beneath the external silence, are combats of giants as in Homer, melées of dragons and hydras, and clouds of phantoms as in Milton, ghostly labyrinths as in Dante. What a gloom enwraps that infinite which each man bears within himself, and by which he measures in despair the desires of his will and the actions of his life!

Alighieri arrived one day at an ill-omened door before which he hesitated. Here is one also before us, on the threshold of which we hesitate. Let us enter notwithstanding.

We have but little to add to what the reader already knows concerning what had happened to Jean Valjean since his adventure with Petit Gervais. From that moment, we have seen, he was another man. What the bishop had desired to do with him, that he had executed. It was more than a transformation—it was a transfiguration.

He succeeded in escaping from sight, sold the bishop's silver, keeping only the candlesticks as souvenirs, glided quietly from city to city across France, came to M—— sur M——, conceived the idea that we have described, accomplished what we have related, gained the point of making himself unassailable and inaccessible and thenceforward—established at M—— sur M——, happy to feel his conscience saddened by his past, and the last half of his existence giving the lie to the first—he lived peaceable, reassured and hopeful, having but two thoughts: to conceal his name and to sanctify his life—to escape from men and to return to God.

These two thoughts were associated so closely in his mind that they formed but a single one; they were both equally absorbing and imperious, and ruled his slightest actions. Ordinarily they were in harmony in the regulation of the conduct of his life; they turned him toward the dark side of life; they made him benevolent and simple-hearted; they counseled him to the same things. Sometimes, however, there was a conflict between them. In such cases, it will be remembered, the man whom all the country around M—— sur M—— called M. Madeleine did not waver in sacrificing the first to the second, his se-

curity to his virtue. Thus, in spite of all reserve and of prudence, he had kept the bishop's candlesticks, worn mourning for him, called and questioned all the little Savoyards who passed by, gathered information concerning the families at Faverolles, and saved the life of old Fauchelevent, in spite of the disquieting insinuations of Javert. It would seem, we have already remarked, that he thought—following the example of all who have been wise, holy, and just—that his highest duty was not toward himself.

But of all these occasions, it must be said, none had ever been anything like that which was now present.

Never had the two ideas that governed the unfortunate man whose sufferings we are relating engaged in so serious a struggle. He comprehended this confusedly, but thoroughly, from the first words that Javert pronounced on entering his office. At the moment when that name which he had so deeply buried was so strangely uttered he was seized with stupor, and as if intoxicated by the sinister grotesqueness of his destiny, and through that stupor he felt the shudder which precedes great shocks; he bent like an oak at the approach of a storm—like a soldier at the approach of an assault. He felt clouds full of thunderings and lightnings gathering upon his head. Even while listening to Javert his first thought was to go, to run, to denounce himself, to drag this Champmathieu out of prison and to put himself in his place; it was painful and sharp as an incision into the living flesh, but passed away, and he said to himself: "Let us see—let us see!" He repressed this first generous impulse and recoiled before such heroism.

Doubtless it would have been fine if after the holy words of the bishop, after so many years of repentance and self-denial, in the midst of a penitence admirably commenced, even in the presence of so terrible a conjecture, he had not faltered an instant and had continued to march on with even pace toward that yawning pit at the bottom of which was heaven; this would have been fine, but this was not the case. We must render an account of what took place in that soul, and we can relate only what was there. What first gained control was the instinct of self-preservation; he collected his ideas hastily, stifled his emotions, took into

consideration the presence of Javert, the great danger, postponed any decision with the firmness of terror, banished from his mind all consideration of the course he should pursue, and resumed his calmness as a gladiator retakes his buckler.

For the rest of the day he was in this state, a tempest within, a perfect calm without; he took only what might be called precautionary measures. All was still confused and jostling in his brain; the agitation there was such that he did not see distinctly the form of any idea; and he could have told nothing of himself, unless it were that he had just received a terrible blow. He went according to his habit to the sick-bed of Fantine, and prolonged his visit by an instinct of kindness, saying to himself that he ought to do so, and recommend her earnestly to the sisters, in case it should happen that he would have to be absent. He felt vaguely that it would perhaps be necessary for him to go to Arras; and without having in the least decided upon his journey he said to himself that, entirely free from suspicion as he was, there would be no difficulty in being a witness of what might pass, and he engaged Scaufflaire's tilbury, in order to be prepared for any emergency.

He dined with a good appetite.

Returning to his room, he collected his thoughts.

He examined the situation and found it an unheard-of one; so unheard of that, in the midst of his reverie, by some strange impulse of almost inexplicable anxiety, he rose from his chair and bolted his door. He feared lest something might yet enter. He barricaded himself against all possibilities.

A moment afterward he blew out his light. It annoyed him.

It seemed to him that somebody could see him.

Who? Somebody?

Alas! what he wanted to keep out of doors had entered; what he wanted to render blind was looking upon him—his conscience.

His conscience—that is to say, God.

At the first moment, however, he deluded himself; he had a feeling of safety and solitude; the bolt drawn, he believed himself impregnable; the candle put out, he felt himself invisible. Then he took possession of himself; he

placed his elbows on the table, rested his head on his hand, and set himself to meditating in the darkness.

"Where am I? Am I not in a dream? What have I heard? Is it really true that I saw this Javert and that he talked to me so? Who can this Champmathieu be? He resembles me, then? Is it possible? When I think that yesterday I was so calm and so far from suspecting anything! What was I doing yesterday at this time? What is there in this matter? How will it turn out? What is to be done?"

Such was the torment he was in. His brain had lost the power of retaining its ideas; they passed away like waves, and he grasped his forehead with both hands to stop them.

Out of this tumult, which overwhelmed his will and his reason, and from which he sought to draw a certainty and a resolution, nothing came clearly forth but anguish.

His brain was burning. He went to the window and threw it wide open. Not a star was in the sky. He returned and sat down by the table.

The first hour thus rolled away.

Little by little, however, vague outlines began to take form and to fix themselves in his meditation; he could perceive, with the precision of reality, not the whole of the situation, but a few details.

He began by recognizing that, however extraordinary and critical the situation was, he was completely master of it.

His stupor only became the deeper.

Independently of the severe and religious aim that his actions had in view, all that he had done up to this day was only a hole that he was digging in which to bury his name. What he had always most dreaded, in his hours of self-communion, in his sleepless nights, was the thought of ever hearing that name pronounced; he felt that would be for him the end of all; that the day on which that name should reappear would see vanish from around him his new life—and who knows, even, perhaps, his new soul from within him. He shuddered at the bare thought that it was possible. Surely, if any one had told him at such moments that an hour would come when that name would resound in his ear, when that hideous name, Jean Valjean, would

start forth suddenly from the night and stand before him; when this fearful glare, destined to dissipate the mystery in which he had wrapped himself, would flash suddenly upon his head, and that this name would not menace him, that this glare would only make his obscurity the deeper, that this rending of the veil would increase the mystery, that this earthquake would consolidate his edifice, that this prodigious event would have no other result, if it seemed good to him, to himself alone, than to render his existence at once more brilliant and more impenetrable, and that, from his encounter with the phantom of Jean Valjean—the good and worthy citizen, M. Madeleine—would come forth more honored, more peaceful, and more respected than ever—if any one had said this to him he would have shaken his head and looked upon the words as nonsense. Well! precisely that had happened; all this grouping of the impossible was now a fact, and God had permitted these absurdities to become real things.

His musings continued to grow clearer. He was getting a wider and wider view of his position.

It seemed to him that he had just awaked from some wondrous slumber, and that he had found himself gliding over a precipice in the middle of the night, standing, shivering, recoiling in vain, upon the very edge of an abyss. He perceived distinctly, in the gloom, an unknown man, a stranger, whom fate had mistaken for him, and was pushing into the gulf in his place. It was necessary, in order that the gulf should be closed, that some one should fall in—he or the other.

He had only to let it alone.

The light became complete, and he recognized this: That his place at the galleys was empty, and, do what he could, it was always awaiting him, that the robbing of Petit Gervais sent him back there, that this empty place would await him and attract him until he should be there, that this was inevitable and fatal. And then he said to himself: That at this very moment he had a substitute, that it appeared that a man named Champmathieu had that unhappy lot, and that, as for himself, present in the future at the galleys in the person of this Champmathieu, present in society under the name of M. Madeleine, he had nothing more to fear, provided he did not prevent men

from sealing upon the head of this Champmathieu that stone of infamy which, like the stone of the sepulchre, falls once never to rise again.

All this was so violent and so strange that he suddenly felt that kind of indescribable movement that no man experiences more than two or three times in his life, a sort of convulsion of the conscience that stirs up all that is dubious in the heart, which is composed of irony, of joy, and of despair, and which might be called a burst of interior laughter.

He hastily relighted his candle.

"Well, what!" said he, "what am I afraid of? Why do I ponder over these things? I am now safe—all is finished. There was but a single half-open door through which my past could make an irruption into my life; that door is now walled up forever! This Javert who has troubled me so long, that fearful instinct which seemed to have divined the truth—that had divined it in fact—and which followed me everywhere, that terrible bloodhound always in pursuit of me, he is thrown off the track, engrossed elsewhere, absolutely baffled. He is satisfied henceforth; he will leave me in quiet; he holds his Jean Valjean fast! Who knows? It is even probable that he will want to leave the city; and all this is accomplished without my aid! And I have nothing to do with it! Ah, yes! but what is there unfortunate in all this? People who should see me upon my honor would think that a catastrophe had befallen me. After all, if there is any harm done to anybody, it is in nowise my fault! Providence has done it all. This is what He wishes, apparently. Have I the right to disarrange what He arranges? What is it that I ask for now? Why do I interfere? It does not concern me. How! I am not satisfied! But what would I have then? The aim to which I have aspired for so many years, my nightly dream, the object of my prayers to heaven—security! I have gained it. It is God's will. I must do nothing contrary to the will of God. And why is it God's will? That I may carry on what I have begun, that I may do good, that I may be one day a grand, encouraging example, that it may be said that there was finally some little happiness resulting from this suffering which I have undergone, and this virtue to which I have returned! Really, I do not understand why

I was so much afraid to go to this honest curé and tell him the whole story as a confessor and ask his advice; this is evidently what he would have said to me: 'It is decided; let the matter alone! Let us not interfere with God.' "

Thus he spoke in the depths of his conscience, hanging over what might be called his own abyss. He rose from his chair and began to walk the room. "Come," said he, "let us think of it no more. The resolution is formed."

But he felt no joy.

Quite the contrary.

One can no more prevent the mind from returning to an idea than the sea from returning to a shore. In the case of the sailor this is called the tide; in the case of the guilty it is called remorse. God upheaves the soul as well as the ocean.

After the lapse of a few moments he could not do otherwise, he resumed this sombre dialogue, in which it was himself who spoke, and himself who listened, saying what he wished to keep silent, listening to what he did not wish to hear, yielding to that mysterious power which said to him: "Think!" as it said two thousand years ago to another condemned: "March!"

Before going further, and in order to be fully understood, it is necessary that we should make, with some emphasis, a single observation.

It is certain that we talk with ourselves; there is not a thinking being who has not experienced that. We may say even that the Word is never a more magnificent mystery than when it goes, in the interior of a man, from his thought to his conscience and returns from his conscience to his thought. It is in this sense only that the words must be understood, so often employed in this chapter, *he said, he exclaimed;* we say to ourselves, we speak to ourselves, we exclaim within ourselves, the external silence not being broken. There is a great tumult within; everything within us speaks except the tongue. The realities of the soul, because they are not visible and palpable, are not the less realities.

He asked himself, then, where he was. He questioned himself upon this "resolution formed." He confessed to himself that all that he had been arranging in his mind was monstrous, that "to let the matter alone, not to inter-

fere with God," was simply horrible, to let this mistake of destiny and of men be accomplished, not to prevent it, to lend himself to it by his silence, to do nothing, finally, was to do all! it was the last degree of hypocritical meanness! it was a base, cowardly, lying, abject, hideous crime!

For the first time within eight years the unhappy man had just tasted the bitter flavor of a wicked thought and a wicked action.

He spit it out with disgust.

He continued to question himself. He sternly asked himself what he had understood by this: "My object is attained." He declared that his life, in truth, did have an object. But what object? to conceal his name? to deceive the police? Was it for so petty a thing that he had done all that he had done? Had he no other object, which was the great one, which was the true one? To save, not his body, but his soul. To become honest and good again. To be an upright man! was it not that above all, that alone, which he had always wished and which the bishop had enjoined upon him? To close the door on his past? But he was not closing it, great God! he was reopening it by committing an infamous act! for he became a robber again, and the most odious of robbers! he robbed another of his existence, his life, his peace, his place in the world, he became an assassin! He murdered, he murdered in a moral sense, a wretched man; he inflicted upon him that frightful life in death, that living burial which is called the galleys. On the contrary, to deliver himself up to save this man, stricken by so ghastly a mistake, to reassume his name, to become again from duty the convict Jean Valjean; that was really to achieve his resurrection, and to close forever the hell from whence he had emerged! to fall back into it in appearance was to emerge in reality! he must do that! all he had done was nothing if he did not do that! all his life was useless, all his suffering was lost. He had only to ask the question: "What was the use?" He felt that the bishop was there, that the bishop was present all the more that he was dead, that the bishop was looking fixedly at him, that henceforth M. l'Madeleine, with all his virtues, would be abominable to him, and the galley slave, Jean Valjean, would be admirable and pure in his sight. That men saw his mask, but the bishop saw his face. That men

saw his life, but the bishop saw his conscience. He must then go to Arras, deliver the wrong Jean Valjean, denounce the right one. Alas! that was the greatest of sacrifices, the most poignant of victories, the final step to be taken, but he must do it. Mournful destiny! he could only enter into sanctity in the eyes of God, by returning into infamy in the eyes of men.

"Well," said he, "let us take this course! Let us do our duty! Let us save this man!"

He pronounced these words in a loud voice, without perceiving that he was speaking aloud.

He took his books, verified them and put them in order. He threw into the fire a package of notes which he held against needy small traders. He wrote a letter, which he sealed, and upon the envelope of which might have been read, if there had been any one in the room at the time: "M. Laffitte, banker, Rue d'Artoise, Paris."

He drew from a secrétaire a pocket-book containing some bank-notes and the passport that he had used that same year in going to the elections.

Had any one seen him while he was doing these various acts with such serious meditation he would not have suspected what was passing within him. Still, at intervals his lips quivered; at other times he raised his head and fixed his eyes on some point of the wall, as if he saw just there something that he wished to clear up or interrogate.

The letter to M. Laffitte finished, he put it in his pocket, as well as the pocket-book, and began his walk again.

The current of his thought had not changed. He still saw his duty clearly written in luminous letters which flared out before his eyes and moved with his gaze: "Go! avow thy name! denounce thyself!"

He saw, also, and as if they were laid bare before him with sensible forms, the two ideas which had been hitherto the double rule of his life: to conceal his name and to sanctify his soul. For the first time they appeared to him absolutely distinct and he saw the difference which separated them. He recognized that one of these ideas was necessarily good, while the other might become evil; that the former was devotion and that the latter was selfishness; that the one said "the neighbor" and that the other said

"me"; that the one came from the light and the other from the night.

They were fighting with each other. He saw them fighting. While he was looking they had expanded before his mind's eye; they were now colossal; and it seemed to him that he saw struggling within him, in that infinite of which we spoke just now, in the midst of darkness and gloom, a goddess and a giantess.

He was full of dismay, but it seemed to him that the good thought was gaining the victory.

He felt that he had reached the second decisive moment of his conscience and his destiny; that the bishop had marked the first phase of his new life, and that this Champmathieu marked the second. After a great crisis a great trial.

Meanwhile the fever, quieted for an instant, returned upon him little by little. A thousand thoughts flashed across him, but they fortified him in his resolution.

One moment he had said that, perhaps, he took the affair too much to heart, that after all this Champmathieu was not worthy of interest, that, in fact, he had committed theft.

He answered: If this man has, in fact, stolen a few apples, that is a month in prison. There is a wide distance between that and the galleys. And who knows, even, has he committed theft? Is it proved? The name of Jean Valjean overwhelms him and seems to dispense with proofs. Are not prosecuting officers in the habit of acting thus? They think him a robber because they know him to be a convict.

At another moment the idea occurred to him that, if he should denounce himself, perhaps the heroism of his action and his honest life for the past seven years, and what he had done for the country, would be considered, and he would be pardoned.

But this supposition quickly vanished, and he smiled bitterly at the thought that the robbery of the 40 sous from Petit Gervais made him a second offender, that that matter would certainly reappear, and by the precise terms of the law he would be condemned to hard labor for life.

He turned away from all illusion, disengaged himself more and more from the earth, and sought consolation and

strength elsewhere. He said to himself that he must do his duty; that perhaps even he should not be more unhappy after having done his duty than after having evaded it; that if he let matters alone, if he remained at M—— sur M——, his reputation, his good name, his good works, the deference, the veneration he commanded, his charity, his riches, his popularity, his virtue, would be tainted with a crime, and what pleasure would there be in all these holy things tied to that hideous thing? while, if he carried out the sacrifice, in the galleys, with his chain, with his iron collar, with his green cap, with his perpetual labor, with his pitiless shame, there would be associated a celestial idea.

Finally, he said to himself that it was a necessity, that his destiny was so fixed that it was not for him to derange the arrangements of God, that at all events he must choose either virtue without and abomination within, or sanctity within and infamy without.

In revolving so many gloomy ideas his courage did not fail, but his brain was fatigued. He began in spite of himself to think of other things, of indifferent things.

His blood rushed violently to his temples. He walked back and forth constantly. Midnight was struck first from the parish church, then from the city hall. He counted the twelve strokes of the two clocks, and he compared the sound of the two bells. It reminded him that, a few days before, he had seen at a junkshop an old bell for sale, upon which was this name: "*Antoine Albin de Romainville.*"

He was cold. He kindled a fire. He did not think to close the window.

Meanwhile he had fallen into his stupor again. It required not a little to recall his mind to what he was thinking of before the clock struck. He succeeded at last.

"Ah! yes," said he, "I had formed the resolution to denounce myself."

And then all at once he thought of Fantine.

"Stop!" said he, "this poor woman!"

Here was a new crisis.

Fantine, abruptly appearing in his reverie, was like a ray of unexpected light. It seemed to him that everything around him was changing its aspect; he exclaimed: "Ah, yes, indeed! so far I have only thought of myself! I have only looked to my own convenience! It is whether I shall

keep silent or denounce myself, conceal my body or save my soul, be a despicable and respected magistrate, or an infamous and venerable galley slave; it is myself, always myself, only myself. But, good God! all this is egotism. Different forms of egotism, but still egotism! Suppose I should think a little of others? The highest duty is to think of others. Let us see, let us examine! I gone, I taken away, I forgotten; what will become of all this? I denounce myself? I am arrested, this Champmathieu is released, I am sent back to the galleys; very well, and what then? what takes place here? Ah! here there is a country, a city, factories, a business, laborers, men, women, old grandfathers, children, poor people! I have created all this, I keep it all alive; wherever a chimney is smoking, I have put the brands in the fire and the meat in the pot; I have produced ease, circulation, credit; before me there was nothing; I have aroused, vivified, animated, quickened, stimulated, enriched all the country; without me, the soul is gone. I take myself away; it all dies. And this woman who has suffered so much, who is so worthy in her fall, all whose misfortunes I have unconsciously caused! And that child which I was going for, which I have promised to the mother! Do I not also owe something to this woman, in reparation for the wrong that I have done her? If I should disappear what happens? The mother dies. The child becomes what she may. This is what comes to pass, if I denounce myself; and if I do not denounce myself? Let us see, if I do not denounce myself?"

After putting this question he stopped; for a moment he hesitated and trembled; but that moment was brief, and he answered with calmness: "Well, this man goes to the galleys, it is true, but, what of that? He has stolen! It is useless for me to say he has not stolen—he has stolen! As for me, I remain here, I go on. In ten years I shall have made 10,000,000 francs; I scatter it over the country, I keep nothing for myself; what is it to me? What I am doing is not for myself. The prosperity of all goes on increasing, industry is quickened and excited, manufactories and workshops are multiplied, families, a hundred families, a thousand families, are happy; the country becomes populous; villages spring up where there were only farms, farms spring up where there was nothing; poverty disappears,

and with poverty disappears debauchery, prostitution, theft, murder, all vices, all crimes! And this poor mother brings up her child! and the whole country is rich and honest! Ah, yes! How foolish, how absurd I was! What was I speaking of in denouncing myself? This demands reflection, surely, and nothing must be precipitate. What! because it would have pleased me to do the grand and the generous! That is melodramatic, after all! Because I only thought of myself, of myself alone, what! to save from a punishment perhaps a little too severe, but in reality just, nobody knows who, a thief, a scoundrel at any rate. Must an entire country be let go to ruin! must a poor, hapless woman perish in the hospital! must a poor little girl perish on the street, like dogs? Ah! that would be abominable! and the mother not even see her child again! and the child hardly have known her mother! And all that for this old whelp of an apple thief, who, beyond all doubt, deserves the galleys for something else, if not for this. Fine scruples these, which save an old vagabond who has, after all, only a few years to live, and who will hardly be more unhappy in the galleys than in his hovel, and which sacrifice a whole population, mothers, wives, children! This poor little Cosette who has no one but me in the world, and who is doubtless at this moment all blue with cold, in the hut of these Thenardiers! They, too, are miserable rascals! And I should fail in my duty toward all these poor beings! And I should go away and denounce myself! And I should commit this silly blunder! Take it at the very worst. Suppose there were a misdeed for me in this, and that my conscience should some day reproach me; the acceptance for the good of others of these reproaches which weigh only upon me, of this misdeed which affects only my own soul, why, that is devotion, that is virtue."

He arose and resumed his walk. This time it seemed to him that he was satisfied.

Diamonds are only found in dark places of the earth; truths are found only in the depths of thought. It seemed to him that after having descended into these depths, after having groped long in the blackest of this darkness, he had at last found one of these diamonds, one of these truths, and that he held it in his hand; and it blinded him to look at it.

"Yes," thought he, "that is it! I am in the true road. I have the solution. I must end by holding fast to something. My choice is made. Let the matter alone! No more vacillation, no more shrinking. This is in the interest of all, not in my own. I am Madeleine, I remain Madeleine. Woe to him who is Jean Valjean! He and I are no longer the same, I do not recognize that man, I no longer know what he is; if it is found that anybody is Jean Valjean at this hour let him take care of himself. That does not concern me. That is a fatal name which is floating about in the darkness; if it stops and settles upon any man, so much the worse for that man."

He looked at himself in the little mirror that hung over his mantel-piece and said: "Yes! To come to a resolution has solaced me! I am quite another man now!"

He took a few steps more, then he stopped short.

"Come!" said he, "I must not hesitate before any of the consequences of the resolution I have formed. There are yet some threads which knit me to this Jean Valjean. They must be broken! There are, in this very room, objects which would accuse me, mute things which would be witnesses; it is done, all these must disappear."

He felt in his pocket, drew out his purse, opened it and took out a little key.

He put his key into a lock, the hole of which was hardly visible, lost as it was in the darkest shading of the figures on the paper which covered the wall. A secret door opened; a kind of false press built between the corner of the wall and the casing of the chimney. There was nothing in this closet but a few refuse trifles! a blue smock-frock, an old pair of trousers, an old knapsack, and a great thorn stick, iron-bound at both ends. Those who had seen Jean Valjean at the time he passed through D——, in October, 1815, would have recognized easily all the fragments of this miserable outfit.

He had kept them, as he had kept the silver candlesticks, to remind him at all times of what he had been. But he concealed what came from the galleys and left the candlesticks that came from the bishop in sight.

He cast a furtive look toward the door, as if he were afraid it would open in spite of the bolt that held it; then with a quick and hasty movement, and, at a single armful,

without even a glance at these things which he had kept so religiously and with so much danger during so many years, he took the whole, rags, stick, knapsack, and threw them all into the fire.

He shut up the false press, and, increasing his precautions, thenceforth useless, since it was empty, concealed the door behind a heavy piece of furniture which he pushed against it.

In a few seconds the room and the wall opposite were lighted up with a great, red, flickering glare. All was burning. The thorn stick cracked and threw out sparks into the middle of the room.

The knapsack, as it was consumed with the horrid rags which it contained, left something uncovered which glistened in the ashes. By bending toward it one could have easily recognized a piece of silver. It was, doubtless, the 40-sou piece stolen from the little Savoyard.

But he did not look at the fire; he continued his walk to and fro, always at the same pace.

Suddenly his eyes fell upon the two silver candlesticks on the mantel, which were glistening dimly in the reflection.

"Stop!" thought he, "all Jean Valjean is contained in them, too. They also must be destroyed."

He took the two candlesticks.

There was fire enough to melt them quickly into an unrecognizable ingot.

He bent over the fire and warmed himself a moment.

It felt really comfortable to him.

"The pleasant warmth," said he.

He stirred the embers with one of the candlesticks.

A minute more and they would have been in the fire.

At that moment it seemed to him that he heard a voice crying within him: "Jean Valjean! Jean Valjean!"

His hair stood on end; he was like a man who hears some terrible thing.

"Yes, that is it, finish!" said the voice, "complete what you are doing! destroy those candlesticks! annihilate this memorial! forget the bishop! forget all! ruin this Champmathieu, yes! very well. Applaud yourself! So it is arranged, it is determined, it is done. Behold a man, a graybeard who knows not what he is accused of, who has done nothing, it may be, an innocent man, whose only misfortune

is to be called by your name, upon whom your name weighs like a crime, who will be taken instead of you; will be condemned, will end his days in abjection and in horror! very well. Be an honored man yourself. Remain M. l'Mayor, remain honorable and honored, enrich the city, feed the poor, bring up the orphans, live happy, virtuous, and admired, and all this time while you are here in joy and in the light there shall be a man wearing your red blouse, bearing your name in ignominy, and dragging your chain in the galleys! Yes! this is a fine arrangement! Oh, wretch!"

The sweat rolled off his forehead. He looked upon the candlesticks with haggard eyes. Meanwhile the voice which spoke within him had not ended. It continued: "Jean Valjean! there shall be about you many voices which will make great noise, which will speak very loud, and which will bless you; and one only which nobody shall hear, and which will curse you in the darkness. Well, listen, wretch! all these blessings shall fall before they reach heaven; only the curse shall mount into the presence of God!"

This voice, at first quite feeble, and which was raised from the most obscure depths of his conscience, had become by degrees loud and formidable, and he heard it now at his ear. It seemed to him that it had emerged from himself, and that it was speaking now from without. He thought he heard the last words so distinctly that he looked about the room with a kind of terror.

"Is there anybody here?" asked he aloud, and in a startled tone.

Then he continued with a laugh, which was like the laugh of an idiot: "What a fool I am! there can not be anybody here."

There was One, but He who was there was not of such as the human eye can see.

He put the candlesticks on the mantel.

Then he resumed his monotonous and dismal walk, which disturbed the man asleep beneath him in his dreams, and wakened him out of his sleep.

This walk soothed him and excited him at the same time. It sometimes seems that on the greatest occasions we put ourselves in motion in order to ask advice from whatever

we may meet by change of place. After a few moments he no longer knew where he was.

He now recoiled with equal terror from each of the resolutions which he had formed in turn. Each of the two ideas which counseled him appeared to him as fatal as the other. What a fatality! What a chance that this Champmathieu should be mistaken for him! To be hurled down headlong by the very means which Providence seemed at first to have employed to give him full security.

There was a moment during which he contemplated the future. Denounce himself, great God! Give himself up? He saw with infinite despair all that he must leave, all that he must resume. He must then bid farewell to this existence, so good, so pure, so radiant; to this respect of all, to honor, to liberty! No more would he go out to walk in the fields, never again would he hear the birds singing in the month of May, never more give alms to the little children! No longer would he feel the sweetness of looks, of gratitude and of love! He would leave this house that he had built, this little room! Everything appeared charming to him now. He would read no more in these books, he would write no more on this little white wood table! His old portress, the only servant he had, would no longer bring him his coffee in the morning. Great God! instead of that the galley crew, the iron collar, the red blouse, the chain at his foot, fatigue, the dungeon, the plank bed, all these horrors, which he knew so well! At his age, after having been what he was! If he were still young! But so old, to be insulted by the first comer, to be tumbled about by the prison guard, to be struck by the jailer's stick! To have his bare feet in iron-bound shoes! To submit morning and evening his leg to the hammer of the roundsman who tests the fetters! To endure the curiosity of strangers who would be told: "This one is the famous Jean Valjean, who was Mayor of M—— sur M——!" At night, dripping with sweat, overwhelmed with weariness, the green cap over his eyes, to mount two by two, under the sergeant's whip, the stepladder of the floating prison! Oh, what wretchedness! Can destiny, then, be malignant like an intelligent being and become monstrous like the human heart?

And do what he might, he always fell back upon this

sharp dilemma which was at the bottom of his thought. To remain in paradise and there become a demon! To re-enter into hell and there become an angel!

What shall be done, great God! what shall be done?

The torment from which he had emerged with so much difficulty broke loose anew within him. His ideas again began to become confused. They took that indescribable, stupefied, and mechanical shape which is peculiar to despair. The name of Romainville returned constantly to his mind, with two lines of a song he had formerly heard. He thought that Romainville is a little wood near Paris, where young lovers go to gather lilacs in the month of April.

He staggered without as well as within. He walked like a little child that is just allowed to go alone.

Now and then, struggling against his fatigue, he made an effort again to arouse his intellect. He endeavored to state finally and conclusively the problem over which he had in some sort fallen exhausted. Must he denounce himself? Must he be silent? He could see nothing distinctly. The vague forms of all the reasonings thrown out by his mind trembled and were dissipated one after another in smoke. But this much he felt, that by whichever resolve he might abide, necessarily, and without possibility of escape, something of himself would surely die; that he was entering into a sepulchre on the right hand, as well as on the left; that he was suffering a death agony, the death agony of his happiness, or the death agony of his virtue.

Alas! all his irresolutions were again upon him. He was no further advanced than when he began.

So struggled beneath its anguish this unhappy soul. Eighteen hundred years before this unfortunate man the mysterious Being, in whom are aggregated all the sanctities and all the sufferings of humanity, He also, while the olive trees were shivering in the fierce breath of the Infinite, had long put away from His hand the fearful chalice that appeared before Him, dripping with shadow and running over with darkness, in the star-filled depths.

IV

FORMS ASSUMED BY SUFFERING DURING SLEEP

THE clock struck three. For five hours he had been walking thus, almost without interruption, when he dropped into his chair.

He fell asleep and dreamed.

This dream, like most dreams, had no further relation to the condition of affairs than its mournful and poignant character, but it made an impression upon him. This nightmare struck him so forcibly that he afterward wrote it down. It is one of the papers in his own handwriting which he has left behind him. We think it our duty to copy it here literally.

Whatever this dream may be, the story of that night would be incomplete if we should omit it. It is the gloomy adventure of a sick soul.

It is as follows: Upon the envelope we find this line written: "The dream that I had that night."

"I was in a field. A great, sad field where there was no grass. It did not seem that it was day nor that it was night.

"I was walking with my brother, the brother of my childhood; this brother of whom, I must say, that I never think, and whom I scarcely remember.

"We were talking, and we met others walking. We were speaking of a neighbor we had formerly, who, since she had lived in the street, always worked with her window open. Even while we talked we felt cold on account of that open window.

"There were no trees in the field.

"We saw a man passing near us. He was entirely naked, ashen-colored, mounted upon a horse which was of the color of earth. The man had no hair; we saw his skull, and the veins in his skull. In his hand he held a stick which was limber like a twig of grapevine, and heavy as iron. This horseman passed by and said nothing.

"My brother said to me: 'Let us take the deserted road.'

"There was a deserted road where we saw not a bush, nor even a sprig of moss. All was of the color of earth,

even the sky. A few steps further, and no one answered me when I spoke. I perceived that my brother was no longer with me.

"I entered the village which I saw. I thought that it must be Romainville [why Romainville?]*

"The first street by which I entered was deserted. I passed into a second street. At the corner of the two streets was a man standing against the wall. I said to this man: 'What place is this? Where am I?' The man made no answer. I saw the door of a house open, I went in.

"The first room was deserted. I entered the second. Behind the door of this room was a man standing against the wall. I asked this man: 'Whose house is this? Where am I?'

"The man made no answer. The house had a garden.

"I went out of the house and into the garden. The garden was deserted. Behind the first tree I found a man standing. I said to this man: 'What is this garden? Where am I?' The man made no answer.

"I wandered about the village, and I perceived that it was a city. All the streets were deserted, all the doors were open. No living being was passing along the streets or stirring in the rooms or walking in the gardens. But behind every angle of a wall, behind every door, behind everything, there was a man standing who kept silence. But one could ever be seen at a time. These men looked at me as I passed by.

"I went out of the city and began to walk in the fields.

"After a little while I turned and I saw a great multitude coming after me. I recognized all the men that I had seen in the city. Their heads were strange. They did not seem to hasten, and still they walked faster than I. They made no sound in walking. In an instant this multitude came up and surrounded me. The faces of these men were of the color of earth.

"Then the first one whom I had seen and questioned on entering the city said to me: 'Where are you going? Do you not know that you have been dead for a long time?'

"I opened my mouth to answer and I perceived that no one was near me."

---

* This parenthesis is in the hand of Jean Valjean.

He awoke. He was chilly. A wind as cold as the morning wind made the sashes of the still open window swing on their hinges. The fire had gone out. The candle was low in the socket. The night was yet dark.

He arose and went to the window. There were still no stars in the sky.

From this window he could look into the courtyard and into the street. A harsh, rattling noise that suddenly resounded from the ground made him look down.

He saw below him two red stars, whose rays danced back and forth grotesquely in the shadow.

His mind was still half-buried in the mist of his reverie: "Yes!" thought he, "there are none in the sky. They are on the earth now."

This confusion, however, faded away; a second noise like the first awakened him completely; he looked and he saw that these two stars were the lamps of a carriage. By the light which they emitted he could distinguish the form of the carriage. It was a tilbury drawn by a small white horse. The noise which he had heard was the sound of the horse's hoofs upon the pavement.

"What carriage is that?" said he to himself. "Who is it that comes so early?"

At that moment there was a low rap at the door of his room.

He shuddered from head to foot and cried in a terrible voice: "Who is there?"

Some one answered: "I, M. l'Mayor."

He recognized the voice of the old woman, his portress.

"Well," said he, "what is it?"

"M. l'Mayor, it is just five o'clock."

"What is that to me?"

"M. l'Mayor, it is the chaise."

"What chaise?"

"The tilbury."

"What tilbury?"

"Did not M. l'Mayor order a tilbury?"

"No," said he.

"The driver says that he has come for M. l'Mayor."

"What driver?"

"M. Scaufflaire's driver."

"M. Scaufflaire?"

That name startled him as if a flash had passed before his face.

"Oh, yes!" he said, "M. Scaufflaire!"

Could the old woman have seen him at that moment she would have been frightened.

There was a long silence. He examined the flame of the candle with a stupid air and took some of the melted wax from around the wick and rolled it in his fingers. The old woman was waiting. She ventured, however, to speak again: "M. l'Mayor, what shall I say?"

"Say that it is right and I am coming down."

V

CLOGS IN THE WHEELS

THE postal service from Arras to M—— sur M—— was still performed at this time by the little mail wagons of the date of the Empire. These mail wagons were two-wheeled cabriolets, lined with buckskin, hung upon jointed springs and having but two seats, one for the driver, the other for the traveler. The wheels were armed with those long threatening hubs which keep other vehicles at a distance, and which are still seen upon the roads of Germany. The letters were carried in a huge oblong box placed behind the cabriolet and making a part of it. This box was painted black and the cabriolet yellow.

These vehicles, which nothing now resembles, were indescribably misshapen and clumsy, and when they were seen from a distance crawling along some road in the horizon they were like those insects called, I think, termites, which with a slender body draw a great train behind. They went, however, very fast. The mail that left Arras every night at one o'clock, after the passing of the courier from Paris, arrived at M—— sur M—— a little before five in the morning.

That night the mail that came down to M—— sur M—— by the road from Hesdin, at the turn of a street, just as it was entering the city, ran against a little tilbury drawn by a white horse which was going in the opposite direction, and in which there was only one person, a man wrapped in a cloak. The wheel of the tilbury received a

very severe blow. The courier cried out to the man to stop, but the traveler did not listen and kept on his way at a rapid trot.

"There is a man in a devilish hurry!" said the courier.

The man who was in such a hurry was he whom we have seen struggling in such pitiable convulsions.

Where was he going? He could not have told. Why was he in haste? He did not know. He went forward at haphazard. Whither? To Arras, doubtless; but perhaps he was going elsewhere also. At moments he felt this, and he shuddered. He plunged into the darkness as into a yawning gulf. Something pushed him, something drew him on. What was passing within him no one could describe, all will understand. What man has not entered, at least once in his life, into this dark cavern of the unknown?

But he had resolved upon nothing, decided nothing, determined nothing, done nothing. None of the acts of his conscience had been final. He was more than ever as at the first moment.

Why was he going to Arras?

He repeated what he had already said to himself when he engaged the cabriolet of Scaufflaire, that, whatever might be the result, there could be no objection to seeing with his own eyes and judging of the circumstances for himself; that it was even prudent that he ought to know what took place; that he could decide nothing without having observed and scrutinized; that in the distance every little thing seems a mountain; that after all, when he should have seen this Champmathieu, some wretch probably, his conscience would be very much reconciled to letting him go to the galleys in his place; that it was true that Javert would be there, and Brevet, Chenildieu, Cochepaille, old convicts who had known him; but surely they would not recognize him; bah! what an idea! that Javert was one hundred miles off the track; that all conjectures and all suppositions were fixed upon this Champmathieu, and that nothing is so stubborn as suppositions and conjectures; that there was, therefore, no danger.

That it was no doubt a dark hour, but that he should get through it; that after all he held his destiny, evil as it might be, in his own hand; that he was master of it. He clung to that thought.

In reality, to tell the truth, he would have preferred not to go to Arras.

Still he was on the way.

Although absorbed in thought he whipped up his horse, which trotted away at that regular and sure full trot that gets over two leagues and a half an hour.

In proportion as the tilbury went forward he felt something within him which shrank back.

At daybreak he was in the open country; the city of M—— sur M—— was a long way behind. He saw the horizon growing lighter; he beheld, without seeing them, all the frozen figures of a winter dawn pass before his eyes. Morning has its spectres as well as evening. He did not see them, but, without his consciousness and by a kind of penetration which was almost physical, those black outlines of trees and hills added to the tumultuous state of his soul an indescribable gloom and apprehension.

Every time he passed one of the isolated houses that stood here and there by the side of the road he said to himself: "But yet there are people there who are sleeping!"

The trotting of the horse, the rattling of the harness, the wheels upon the pavement made a gentle, monotonous sound. These things are charming when one is joyful and mournful when one is sad.

It was broad day when he arrived at Hesdin. He stopped before an inn to let his horse breathe and to have some oats given him.

This horse was, as Scaufflaire had said, of that small breed of the Boulonnais which has too much head, too much belly, and not enough neck, but which has an open chest, a large rump, fine and slender legs, and a firm foot; a homely race, but strong and sound. The excellent animal had made five leagues in two hours and had not turned a hair.

He did not get out of the tilbury. The stable-boy who brought the oats stooped down suddenly and examined the left wheel.

"Have you gone far so?" said the boy.

He answered, almost without breaking up his train of thought: "Why?"

"Have you come far?" said the boy.

"Five leagues from here."

"Ah!"

"Why do you say 'ah'?"

The boy stooped down again, was silent a moment, with his eyes fixed on the wheel, then he rose up, saying: "To think that this wheel has just come five leagues, that is possible; but it is very sure that it won't go a quarter of a league now."

He sprang down from the tilbury.

"What do you say, my friend?"

"I say that it is a miracle that you have come five leagues without tumbling, you and your horse, into some ditch on the way. Look for yourself."

The wheel, in fact, was badly damaged. The collision with the mail wagon had broken two spokes and loosened the hub so that the nut no longer held.

"My friend," said he to the stable-boy, "is there a wheelwright here?"

"Certainly, monsieur."

"Do me the favor to go for him."

"There he is, close by. Halloo! M. Bourgaillard!"

M. Bourgaillard, the wheelwright, was on his own doorstep. He came and examined the wheel and made such a grimace as a surgeon makes at the sight of a broken leg.

"Can you mend that wheel on the spot?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"When can I start again?"

"To-morrow."

"To-morrow!"

"It is a good day's work. Is monsieur in a great hurry?"

"A very great hurry. I must leave in an hour at the latest."

"Impossible, monsieur."

"I will pay whatever you like."

"Impossible."

"Well! in two hours."

"Impossible to-day. There are two spokes and a hub to be repaired. Monsieur can not start again before to-morrow."

"My business can not wait till to-morrow. Instead of mending this wheel can not it be replaced?"

"How so?"

"You are a wheelwright?"

"Certainly, monsieur."

"Have not you a wheel to sell me? I could start away at once."

"A wheel to exchange?"

"Yes."

"I have not a wheel made for your cabriolet. Two wheels make a pair. Two wheels don't go together haphazard."

"In that case, sell me a pair of wheels."

"Monsieur, every wheel doesn't go on to every axle."

"But try."

"It's of no use, monsieur. I have nothing but cart wheels to sell. We are a small place here."

"Have you a cabriolet to let?"

The wheelwright, at the first glance, had seen that the tilbury was a hired vehicle. He shrugged his shoulders.

"You take good care of the cabriolets that you hire! I should have one a good while before I would let it to you."

"Well, sell it to me."

"I have not one."

"What! not even a carriole? I am not hard to suit, as you see."

"We are a little place. True, I have under the old shed there," added the wheelwright, "an old chaise that belongs to a citizen of the place, who has given it to me to keep, and who uses it every 29th of February. I would let it to you; of course it is nothing to me. The citizen must not see it go by, and, then, it is clumsy; it would take two horses."

"I will take two post-horses."

"Where is monsieur going?"

"To Arras."

"And monsieur would like to get there to-day?"

"I would."

"By taking post-horses?"

"Why not?"

"Will monsieur be satisfied to arrive by four o'clock to-morrow morning?"

"No, indeed."

"I mean, you see, that there is something to be said in taking post-horses. Monsieur has his passport?"

"Yes."

"Well, by taking post-horses, monsieur will not reach

Arras before to-morrow. We are a cross-road. The relays are poorly served, the horses are in the fields. The plowing season has just commenced; heavy teams are needed and the horses are taken from everywhere, from the post as well as elsewhere. Monsieur will have to wait at least three or four hours at each relay and then they go at a walk. There are a good many hills to climb."

"Well, I will go on horseback. Unhitch the cabriolet. Somebody in the place can surely sell me a saddle."

"Certainly, but will this horse go under the saddle?"

"It is true, I had forgotten it, he will not."

"Then—"

"But I can surely find in the village a horse to let?"

"A horse to go to Arras at one trip?"

"Yes."

"It would take a better horse than there is in our parts. You would have to buy him, too, for nobody knows you. But neither to sell nor to let, neither for 500 francs nor for 1,000 francs, will you find such a one."

"What shall I do?"

"The best thing to do, like a sensible man, is that I mend the wheel and you continue your journey to-morrow."

"To-morrow will be too late."

"Confound it!"

"Is there no mail that goes to Arras? When does it pass?"

"To-night. Both mails make the trip in the night, the up mail as well as the down."

"How! must you take a whole day to mend this wheel?"

"A whole day, and a long one."

"If you set two workmen at it?"

"If I should set ten."

"If you should tie the spokes with cords?"

"The spokes I could, but not the hub. And then the tire is also in bad condition."

"Is there no livery stable in the city?"

"No."

"Is there another wheelwright?"

The stable-boy and the wheelwright answered at the same time with a shake of the head: "No."

He felt an immense joy.

It was evident that Providence was in the matter. It

was Providence that had broken the wheel of the tilbury, and stopped him on his way. He had not yielded to this sort of first summons; he had made all possible efforts to continue his journey; he had faithfully and scrupulously exhausted every means; he had shrunk neither before the season, nor from fatigue, nor from expense; he had nothing for which to reproach himself. If he went no further, it no longer concerned him. It was not now his fault; it was not the act of his conscience, but the act of Providence.

He breathed. He breathed freely and with a full chest for the first time since Javert's visit. It seemed to him that the iron hand which had gripped his heart for twenty hours was relaxed.

It appeared to him that now God was for him, was manifestly for him.

He said to himself that he had done all that he could, and that now he had only to retrace his steps tranquilly.

If his conversation with the wheelwright had taken place in a room of the inn it would have had no witnesses, nobody would have heard it, the matter would have rested there, and it is probable that we should not have had to relate any of the events which follow, but that conversation occurred in the street. Every colloquy in the street inevitably gathers a circle. There are always people who ask nothing better than to be spectators. While he was questioning the wheelwright, some of the passers-by had stopped around him. After listening for a few minutes, a young boy, whom no one had noticed, had separated from the group and ran away.

At the instant the traveler, after the internal deliberation which we have just indicated, was making up his mind to go back, this boy returned. He was accompanied by an old woman.

"Monsieur," said the woman, "my boy tells me that you are anxious to hire a cabriolet."

This simple speech, uttered by an old woman who was brought there by a boy, made the sweat pour down his back. He thought he saw the hand he was but now freed from reappear in the shadow behind him, all ready to seize him again.

He answered: "Yes, good woman, I am looking for a cabriolet to hire."

And he hastened to add: "But there is none in the place."

"Yes, there is," said the dame.

"Where is it, then?" broke in the wheelwright.

"At my house," replied the dame.

He shuddered. The fatal hand had closed upon him again.

The old woman had, in fact, under a shed, a sort of willow carriole. The blacksmith and the boy at the inn, angry that the traveler should escape them, intervened.

It was a frightful go-cart; it had no springs; it was true the seat was hung inside with leather straps; it would not keep out the rain, the wheels were rusty and rotten, it couldn't go much further than the tilbury, a real jumper. This gentleman would do very wrong to set out in it, etc.

This was all true; but this go-cart, this jumper, this thing, whatever it might be, went upon two wheels and could go to Arras.

He paid what was asked, left the tilbury to be mended at the wheelwright's against his return, had the white horse harnessed to the carriole, got in, and resumed the route he had followed since morning.

The moment the carriole started he acknowledged that he had felt an instant before a certain joy at the thought that he should not go where he was going. He examined that joy with a sort of anger and thought it absurd. Why should he feel joy at going back? After all, he was making a journey of his own accord—nobody forced him to it.

And certainly nothing could happen which he did not choose to have happen.

As he was leaving Hesdin, he heard a voice crying out: "Stop! stop!" He stopped the carriole with a hasty movement, in which there was still something strangely feverish and convulsive which resembled hope.

It was the dame's little boy.

"Monsieur," said he, "it was I who got the carriole for you."

"Well!"

"You have not given me anything."

He, who gave to all, and so freely, felt this claim was exorbitant and almost odious.

"Oh! is it you, you beggar?" said he; "you shall have nothing!"

He whipped up the horse and started away at a quick trot.

He had lost a good deal of time at Hesdin; he wished to make it up. The little horse was plucky, and pulled enough for two; but it was February, it had rained, the roads were bad. And then, it was no longer the tilbury. The carriole ran hard and was very heavy. And besides there were many steep hills.

He was almost four hours going from Hesdin to St. Pol. Four hours for five leagues.

At St. Pol he drove to the nearest inn and had the horse taken to the stable. As he had promised Scaufflaire, he stood near the manger while the horse was eating. He was thinking of things sad and confused.

The innkeeper's wife came into the stable.

"Does not monsieur wish breakfast?"

"Why, it is true," said he, "I have a good appetite."

He followed the woman, who had a fresh and pleasant face. She led him into a low hall, where there were some tables covered with oilcloth.

"Be quick," said he, "I must start again. I am in a hurry."

A big Flemish servant-girl waited on him in all haste. He looked at the girl with a feeling of comfort.

"This is what ailed me," thought he. "I had not breakfasted."

His breakfast was served. He seized the bread, bit a piece, then slowly put it back on the table, and did not touch anything more.

A teamster was eating at another table. He said to this man: "Why is their bread so bitter?"

The teamster was a German and did not understand him.

He returned to the stable for his horse.

An hour later he had left St. Pol and was driving toward Tinques, which is but five leagues from Arras.

What was he doing during the trip? What was he thinking about? As in the morning, he saw the trees pass by, the thatched roofs, the cultivated fields and the dissolving views of the country which change at every turn

of the road. Such scenes are sometimes sufficient for the soul and almost do away with thought. To see a thousand objects for the first and for the last time, what can be deeper and more melancholy? To travel is to be born and to die at every instant. It may be that in the most shadowy portion of his mind he was drawing a comparison between these changing horizons and human existence. All the facts of life are perpetually in flight before us. Darkness and light alternate with each other. After a flash, an eclipse; we look, we hasten, we stretch out our hands to seize what is passing; every event is a turn of the road; and all at once we are old. We feel a slight shock, all is black, we distinguish a dark door, this gloomy horse of life which was carrying us stops, and we see a veiled and unknown form that turns him out into the darkness.

Twilight was falling just as the children coming out of school beheld our traveler entering Tinques. It is true that the days were still short. He did not stop at Tinques. As he was driving out of the village a countryman who was repairing the road raised his head and said: "Your horse is very tired."

The poor beast, in fact, was not going faster than a walk.

"Are you going to Arras?" added the countryman.

"Yes."

"If you go at this rate you won't get there very early."

He stopped his horse and asked the countryman: "How far is it from here to Arras?"

"Near seven long leagues."

"How is that? the post route only counts five and a quarter."

"Ah!" replied the workman: "then you don't know that the road is being repaired. You will find it cut off a quarter of an hour from here. There's no means of going further."

"Indeed!"

"You will take the left, the road that leads to Carency, and cross the river; when you are at Camblin you will turn to the right; that is the road from Mont Saint-Eloy to Arras."

"But it is night, and I shall lose my way."

"You are not of these parts?"

"No. Besides, they are all cross-roads."

"Stop, monsieur," the countryman continued; "do you want I should give you some advice? Your horse is tired, go back to Tinques. There is a good house there. Sleep there. You can go on to Arras to-morrow."

"I must be there to-night—this evening."

"That is another thing. Then go back all the same to that inn, and take an extra horse. The boy that will go with the horse will guide you through the cross-roads."

He followed the countryman's advice, retraced his steps, and a half-hour afterward he again passed the same place, but at a full trot, with a good extra horse. A stable-boy, who called himself a postilion, was sitting upon the shaft of the carriole.

He felt, however, that he was losing time. It was now quite dark.

They were driving through a cross-path. The road became frightful. The carriole tumbled from one rut to the other. He said to the postilion: "Keep up a trot, and double drink-money."

In one of the jolts the whiffletree broke.

"Monsieur," said the postilion: "the whiffletree is broken; I do not know how to harness my horse now. This road is very bad at night. If you will come back and stop at Tinques we can be at Arras early to-morrow morning."

He answered: "Have you a piece of string and a knife?"

"Yes, monsieur."

He cut off the limb of a tree and made a whiffletree of it.

This was another loss of twenty minutes; but they started off at a gallop.

The plain was dark. A low fog, thick and black, was creeping over the hilltops and floating away like smoke. There were glimmering flashes from the clouds. A strong wind which came from the sea made a sound all around the horizon like the moving of furniture. Everything that he caught a glimpse of had an attitude of terror. How all things shudder under the terrible breath of night.

The cold penetrated him. He had not eaten since the evening before. He recalled vaguely to his mind his other night adventure in the great plain near D——, eight years before; and it seemed yesterday to him. Some distant bell

struck the hour. He asked the boy: "What o'clock is that?"

"Seven o'clock, monsieur; we shall be in Arras at eight. We have only three leagues."

At this moment he thought for the first time, and it seemed strange that it had not occurred to him sooner, that perhaps all the trouble he was taking might be useless; that he did not even know the hour of the trial; that he should, at least, have informed himself of that; that it was foolish to be going on at this rate, without knowing whether it would be of any use. Then he figured out some calculations in his mind; that ordinarily the sessions of the Court of Assize began at nine o'clock in the morning; that this case would not occupy much time; this apple stealing would be very short; that there would be nothing but a question of identity; four or five witnesses and some little to be said by the lawyers; that he would get there after it was all over!

The postilion whipped up the horses. They had crossed the river and left Mont Saint-Eloy behind them.

The night grew darker and darker.

VI

SISTER SIMPLICE PUT TO THE PROOF

MEANWHILE, at that very moment, Fantine was in ecstasies.

She had passed a very bad night. Cough frightful, fever redoubled; she had bad dreams. In the morning, when the doctor came, she was delirious. He appeared to be alarmed, and asked to be informed as soon as M. Madeleine came.

All the morning she was low-spirited, spoke little, and was making folds in the sheets, murmuring in a low voice over some calculations, which appeared to be calculations of distances. Her eyes were hollow and fixed. The light seemed almost gone out; but then, at moments, they would be lighted up and sparkle like stars. It seems as though at the approach of a certain dark hour the light of heaven infills those who are leaving the light of earth.

Whenever Sister Simplice asked her how she was she

answered invariably: "Well. I would like to see M. Madeleine."

A few months earlier, when Fantine had lost the last of her modesty, her last shame and her last happiness, she was the shadow of herself; now she was the spectre of herself. Physical suffering had completed the work of moral suffering. This creature of twenty-five years had a wrinkled forehead, flabby cheeks, pinched nostrils, shriveled gums, a leaden complexion, a bony neck, protruding collarbones, skinny limbs, an earthy skin, and her fair hair was mixed with gray. Alas! how sickness extemporizes old age.

At noon the doctor came again, left a few prescriptions, inquired if the mayor had been at the infirmary, and shook his head.

M. Madeleine usually came at three o'clock to see the sick woman. As exactitude was kindness, he was exact.

About 2:30 o'clock Fantine began to be agitated. In the space of twenty minutes she asked the nun more than ten times: "My sister, what time is it?"

The clock struck three. At the third stroke Fantine rose up in bed—ordinarily she could hardly turn herself—she joined her two shrunken and yellow hands in a sort of convulsive clasp, and the nun heard from her one of those deep sighs which seem to uplift a great weight. Then Fantine turned and looked toward the door.

Nobody came in; the door did not open.

She sat so for a quarter of an hour, her eyes fixed upon the door, motionless, and as if holding her breath. The sister dared not speak. The church clock struck the quarter. Fantine fell back upon her pillow.

She said nothing, and again began to make folds in the sheet.

A half-hour passed, then an hour, but no one came; every time the clock struck Fantine rose and looked toward the door, then she fell back.

Her thought could be clearly seen, but she pronounced no name; she did not complain, she found no fault. She only coughed mournfully. One would have said that something dark was settling down upon her. She was livid and her lips were blue. She smiled at times.

The clock struck five. Then the sister heard her speak

very low and gently: "But since I am going away to-morrow he does wrong not to come to-day!"

Sister Simplice herself was surprised at M. Madeleine's delay.

Meanwhile, Fantine was looking at the canopy of her bed. She seemed to be seeking to recall something to her mind. All at once she began to sing in a voice as feeble as a whisper. The nun listened. This is what Fantine sang:

"Nous achèterons de bien belles choses
En nous promenant le long des faubourgs.

"Les bleuets sont bleus, les roses, sont roses,
Les bleuets sont bleus, j'aime mes amours.

"La vierge Marie auprès de mon poêle
Est venue hier en manteau brodé;
Et m'a dit: Voici, caché sous mon voile,
Le petit qu'un jour tu m'as demandé.
Courez à la ville, ayez de la toile,
Achetez du fil, achetez un dé.
'Nous achèterons de bien belles choses
En nous promenant le long des faubourgs.'

"Bonne sainte Vierge, auprès de mon poêle
J'ai mis un berceau de rubans orné;
Dieu me donnerait sa plus belle étoile.
J'aime mieux l'enfant que tu m'as donné
Madame, que faire avec cette toile?
Faites en trousseau pour mon nouveau-né.
Les bleuets sont bleus, les roses sont roses,
Les bleuets sont bleus, j'aime mes amours.

"Lavez cette toile—'Ou?'—'Dans la rivière;'
Faites-en, sans rien gâter ni salir,
Une belle jupe avec sa brassière
Que je veux broder et de fleurs emplir.
'L'enfant n'est plus là, madame, qu'en faire?
Faites-en un drap pour m'ensevelir?'

"Nous achèterons de bien belles choses
En nous promenant le long de faubourgs.
Les bleuets sont bleus, les roses sont roses,
Les bleuets sont bleus, j'aime les amours." *

* "We will buy very pretty things,
A-walking through the faubourgs.

This was an old nursery song with which she once used to sing her little Cosette to sleep, and which had not occurred to her mind for the five years since she had had her child with her. She sang it in a voice so sad, and to an air so sweet, that it could not but draw tears even from a nun. The sister, accustomed to austerity as she was, felt a drop upon her cheek.

The clock struck six. Fantine did not appear to hear. She seemed no longer to pay attention to anything around her.

Sister Simplice sent a girl to inquire of the portress of the factory if the mayor had come in, and if he would not very soon come to the infirmary. The girl returned in a few minutes.

"Violets are blue, roses are red,
Violets are blue, I love my loves.

"The Virgin Mary to my bed
Came yesterday in broidered cloak
And told me: 'Here, hidden in my veil
Is the babe that once you asked of me.'
Run to the town, get linen,
Buy thread, buy a thimble.
We will buy very pretty things,
A-walking through the faubourgs.

"Good, holy Virgin, by my bed
I have put a cradle draped with ribbons;
Were God to give me His fairest star,
I should love the babe thou hast given me more.
Madame, what shall be done with this linen?
Make a trousseau for my new-born?
Violets are blue, roses are red,
Violets are blue, I love my loves.

"Wash this linen—'Where?'—'In the river;'
Make of it, without soiling or spoiling,
A pretty skirt—a very long skirt,
Which I will broider and fill with flowers.
'The child is gone, madame; what more?
Make of it a shroud to bury me?'

"We will buy very pretty things
A-walking in the faubourgs.
Violets are blue, roses are red,
Violets are blue, I love my loves."

Fantine was still motionless, and appeared to be absorbed in her own thoughts.

The servant related in a whisper to Sister Simplice that the mayor had gone away that morning before six o'clock in a little tilbury drawn by a white horse, cold as the weather was; that he went alone, without even a driver; that no one knew the road he had taken; that some said he had been seen to turn off by the road to Arras, that others were sure they had met him on the road to Paris; that when he went away he seemed, as usual, very kind, and that he simply said to the portress that he need not be expected that night.

While the two women were whispering, with their backs turned toward Fantine's bed, the sister questioning, the servant conjecturing, Fantine, with that feverish vivacity of certain organic diseases, which unites the free movement of health with the frightful exhaustion of death, had risen to her knees on the bed, her shriveled arms resting on the bolster, and, with her head passing through the opening of the curtains, she listened. All at once she exclaimed: "You are talking there of M. Madeleine! Why do you talk so low? What has he done? Why does he not come?"

Her voice was so harsh and rough that the two women thought they heard the voice of a man; they turned toward her affrighted.

"Why don't you answer?" cried Fantine.

The servant stammered out: "The portress told me that he could not come to-day."

"My child," said the sister, "be calm, lie down again."

Fantine, without changing her attitude, resumed with a loud voice, and in a tone at once piercing and imperious: "He can not come. Why not? You know the reason. You were whispering it there between you. I want to know."

The servant whispered quickly in the nun's ear: "Answer that he is busy with the city council."

Sister Simplice reddened slightly; it was a lie that the servant had proposed to her. On the other hand, it did seem to her that to tell the truth to the sick woman would, doubtless, be a terrible blow, and that it was dangerous in the state in which Fantine was. This blush did not last

long. The sister turned her calm, sad eye upon Fantine, and said: "The mayor has gone away."

Fantine sprang up and sat upon her feet. Her eyes sparkled. A marvelous joy spread over that mournful face.

"Gone away!" she exclaimed. "He has gone for Cosette!"

Then she stretched her hands toward heaven and her whole countenance became ineffable. Her lips moved; she was praying in a whisper.

When the prayer was ended: "My sister," said she, "I am quite willing to lie down again. I will do whatever you wish; I was naughty just now; pardon me for having talked so loud; it is very bad to talk loud; I know it, my good sister; but see how happy I am. God is kind, M. Madeleine is good; just think of it, he has gone to Montfermeil for my little Cosette."

She lay down again, helped the nun to arrange the pillow, and kissed a little silver cross which she wore at her neck, and which Sister Simplice had given her.

"My child," said the sister, "try to rest now and do not talk any more."

Fantine took the sister's hand between hers, they were moist; the sister was pained to feel it.

"He started this morning for Paris. Indeed, he need not even go through Paris. Montfermeil is a little to the left in coming. You remember what he said yesterday, when I spoke to him about Cosette: '*Very soon, very soon!*' This is a surprise he has for me. You know he had me sign a letter to take her away from the Thenardiers. They will have nothing to say, will they? They will give up Cosette. Because they have their pay. The authorities would not let them keep a child when they are paid. My sister, do not make signs to me that I must not talk. I am very happy, I am doing very well. I have no pain at all, I am going to see Cosette again, I am hungry even. For almost five years I have not seen her. You do not, you can not imagine what a hold children have upon you! And, then, she will be so handsome, you will see! If you knew she has such pretty little rosy fingers! First, she will have very beautiful hands. At a year old she had ridiculous hands—so! She must be large now. She is seven years

old. She is a little lady. I call her Cosette, but her name is Euphrasie. Now, this morning I was looking at the dust on the mantel, and I had an idea that I should see Cosette again very soon! Oh, dear! how wrong it is to be years without seeing one's children! We ought to remember that life is not eternal! Oh! how good it is in the mayor to go—true, it is very cold! He had his cloak, at least! He will be here to-morrow, will he not? That will make to-morrow a fête. To-morrow morning, my sister, you will remind me to put on my little lace cap. Montfermeil is a country place. I made the trip on foot once. It was a long way for me. But the diligences go very fast. He will be here to-morrow with Cosette! How far is it from here to Montfermeil?"

The sister, who had no idea of the distance, answered: "Oh! I feel sure that he will be here to-morrow."

"To-morrow! to-morrow!" said Fantine, "I shall see Cosette to-morrow! See, good sister of God, I am well now. I am wild; I would dance, if anybody wanted me to."

One who had seen her a quarter of an hour before could not have understood this. Now she was all rosy; she talked in a lively, natural tone, her whole face was only a smile. At times she laughed while whispering to herself. A mother's joy is almost like a child's.

"Well," resumed the nun, "now you are happy, obey me—do not talk any more."

Fantine laid her head upon the pillow and said in a low voice: "Yes, lie down again; be prudent now that you are going to have your child. Sister Simplice is right. All here are right."

And then, without moving or turning her head, she began to look all about, with her eyes wide open, and a joyous air, and she said nothing more.

The sister closed the curtains, hoping that she would sleep.

Between seven and eight o'clock the doctor came. Hearing no sound, he supposed that Fantine was asleep, went in softly and approached the bed on tiptoe. He drew the curtains aside, and by the glimmer of the twilight he saw Fantine's large, calm eyes looking at him.

She said to him: "Monsieur, you will let her lie by my side in a little bed, won't you?"

The doctor thought she was delirious. She added: "Look, there is just room."

The doctor took Sister Simplice aside, who explained the matter to him. That M. Madeleine was absent for a day or two, and that, not being certain, they had not thought it best to undeceive the sick woman, who believed the mayor had gone to Montfermeil; that it was possible, after all, that she had guessed aright. The doctor approved of this.

He returned to Fantine's bed again and she continued: "Then, you see, in the morning when she wakes, I can say good-morning to the poor kitten; and at night, when I am awake, I can hear her sleep. Her little breathing is so sweet it will do me good."

"Give me your hand," said the doctor.

She reached out her hand and exclaimed, with a laugh: "Oh, stop! Indeed, it is true you don't know! but I am cured. Cosette is coming to-morrow."

The doctor was surprised. She was better. Her languor was less. Her pulse was stronger. A sort of new life was all at once reanimating this poor exhausted being.

"Doctor," she continued, "has the sister told you that M. l'Mayor has gone for the little thing?"

The doctor recommended silence, and that she should avoid all painful emotion. He prescribed an infusion of pure quinine, and, in case the fever should return in the night, a soothing potion. As he was going away he said to the sister: "She is better. If by good fortune the mayor should really come back to-morrow with the child, who knows? there are such astonishing crises; we have seen great joy instantly cure diseases; I am well aware that this is an organic disease, and far advanced, but this is all such a mystery! We shall save her, perhaps!"

VII

THE TRAVELER ARRIVES AND PROVIDES FOR HIS RETURN

IT was nearly eight o'clock in the evening when the carriole which was left on the road drove into the yard of the Hôtel de la Poste at Arras. The man whom we have followed thus far got out, answered the hospitalities of the

inn's people with an absent-minded air, sent back the extra horse, and took the little white one to the stable himself; then he opened the door of a billiard-room on the first floor, took a seat and leaned his elbows on a table. He had spent fourteen hours in this trip, which he expected to make in six. He did himself the justice to feel that it was not his fault; but at bottom he was not sorry for it.

The landlady entered.

"Will monsieur have a bed? will monsieur have supper?"

He shook his head.

"The stable-boy says that monsieur's horse is very tired!"

Here he broke silence.

"Is not the horse able to start again to-morrow morning?"

"Oh! monsieur! he needs at least two days' rest."

He asked: "Is not the bureau of the post here?"

"Yes, sir."

The hostess led him to the bureau; he showed his passport, inquired if there were an opportunity to return that very night to M—— sur M—— by the mail coach. Only one seat was vacant, that by the side of the driver; he retained it and paid for it. "Monsieur," said the booking-clerk, "don't fail to be here ready to start at precisely one o'clock in the morning."

This done, he left the hotel and began to walk in the city.

He was not acquainted in Arras, the streets were dark, and he went haphazard. Nevertheless he seemed to refrain obstinately from asking his way. He crossed the little river Crinchon, and found himself in a labyrinth of narrow streets, where he was soon lost. A citizen came along with a lantern. After some hesitation he determined to speak to this man, but not until he had looked before and behind, as if he were afraid that somebody might overhear the question he was about to ask.

"Monsieur," said he, "the court-house, if you please?"

"You are not a resident of the city, monsieur," answered the citizen, who was an old man; "well, follow me; I am going right by the court-house, that is to say, the city hall. For they are repairing the court-house just now, and the courts are holding their sessions at the city hall, temporarily."

"Is it there," asked he, "that the assizes are held?"

"Certainly, monsieur; you see, what is the city hall today was the bishop's palace before the Revolution. M. de Conzié, who was bishop in '82, had a large hall built. The court is held in that hall."

As they walked along, the citizen said to him: "If monsieur wishes to see a trial he is rather late. Ordinarily the sessions close at six o'clock."

However, when they reached the great square the citizen showed him four long lighted windows on the front of a vast, dark building.

"Faith, monsieur, you are in time, you are fortunate. Do you see those four windows? That is the court of assizes. There is a light there. Then they have not finished. The case must have been prolonged, and they are having an evening session. Are you interested in this case? Is it a criminal trial? Are you a witness?"

He answered: "I have no business; I only wish to speak to a lawyer."

"That's another thing," said the citizen. "Stop, monsieur, here is the door. The doorkeeper is up there. You have only to go up the grand stairway."

He followed the citizen's instructions, and in a few minutes found himself in a hall where there were many people, and scattered groups of lawyers in their robes, whispering, here and there.

It is always a chilling sight to see these gatherings of men clothed in black, talking among themselves in a low voice on the threshold of the chamber of justice. It is rare that charity and pity can be found in their words. What are oftenest heard are sentences pronounced in advance. All these groups seem to the observer, who passes musingly by, like so many gloomy hives where buzzing spirits are building, in common, all sorts of dark structures.

This hall, which, though spacious, was lighted by a single lamp, was an ancient hall of the Episcopal palace, and served as a waiting-room. A double folding door, which was now closed, separated it from the large room in which the court of assizes was in session.

The obscurity was such that he felt no fear in addressing the first lawyer whom he met.

"Monsieur," said he, "how are they getting along?"

"It is finished," said the lawyer.

"Finished?"

The word was repeated in such a tone that the lawyer turned around.

"Pardon me, monsieur, you are a relative, perhaps?"

"No. I know no one here. And was there a sentence?"

"Of course. It was hardly possible for it to be otherwise."

"To hard labor?"

"For life."

He continued in a voice so weak that it could hardly be heard: "The identity was established, then?"

"What identity?" responded the lawyer. "There was no identity to be established. It was a simple affair. This woman had killed her child, the infanticide was proved, the jury were not satisfied that there was any premeditation; she was sentenced for life."

"It is a woman, then?" said he.

"Certainly. The Limosin girl. What else are you speaking of?"

"Nothing; but if it is finished, why is the hall still lighted up?"

"That is for the other case, which commenced nearly two hours ago."

"What other case?"

"Oh! that is a clear one also. It is a sort of thief, a second offender, a galley slave, a case of robbery. I forget his name. He looks like a bandit. Were it for nothing but having such a face, I would send him to the galleys."

"Monsieur," asked he, "is there any means of getting into the hall?"

"I think not, really. There is a great crowd. However, they are taking a recess. Some people have come out, and when the session is resumed, you can try."

"How do you get in?"

"Through that large door."

The lawyer left him. In a few moments he had undergone almost at the same time, almost together, all possible emotions. The words of this indifferent man had alternately pierced his heart like icicles and like flames of fire. When he learned that it was not concluded he drew breath;

but he could not have told whether what he felt was satisfaction or pain.

He approached several groups and listened to their talk. The calendar of the term being very heavy, the judge had set down two short, simple cases for that day. They had begun with the infanticide, and now were on the convict, the second offender, the "old stager." This man had stolen some apples, but that did not appear to be very well proved; what was proved was that he had been in the galleys at Toulon. This was what ruined his case. The examination of the man had been finished, and the testimony of the witnesses had been taken; but there yet remained the argument of the counsel, and the summing up of the prosecuting attorney; it would hardly be finished before midnight. The man would probably be condemned; the prosecuting attorney was very good, and never *failed* with his prisoners; he was a fellow of talent, who wrote poetry.

An officer stood near the door which opened into the court-room.

He asked this officer: "Monsieur, will the door be opened soon?"

"It will not be opened," said the officer.

"How! it will not be opened when the session is resumed? Is there not a recess?"

"The session has just been resumed," answered the officer, "but the door will not be opened again."

"Why not?"

"Because the hall is full."

"What! there are no more seats?"

"Not a single one. The door is closed. No one can enter."

The officer added, after a silence: "There are, indeed, two or three places still behind M. l'Judge, but M. l'Judge admits none but public functionaries to them."

So saying, the officer turned his back.

He retired with his head bowed down, crossed the antechamber, and walked slowly down the staircase, seeming to hesitate at every step. It is probable he was holding counsel with himself. The violent combat that had been going on within him since the previous evening was not finished, and every moment he fell upon some new turn.

When he reached the turn of the stairway, he leaned

against the railing and folded his arms. Suddenly he opened his coat, drew out his pocketbook, took out a pencil, tore out a sheet, and wrote rapidly upon that sheet, by the glimmering light, this line: "*M. Madeleine, Mayor of M—— sur M——.*" Then he went up the stairs again rapidly, passed through the crowd, walked straight to the officer, handed him the paper, and said to him with authority: "Carry that to M. l'Judge."

The officer took the paper, cast his eye upon it, and obeyed.

VIII

ADMISSION BY FAVOR

WITHOUT himself suspecting it, the Mayor of M—— sur M—— had a certain celebrity. For seven years the reputation of his virtue had been extending throughout Bas-Boulonnais; it had finally crossed the boundaries of the little county, and had spread into the two or three neighboring departments. Besides the considerable service that he had rendered to the chief town by reviving the manufacture of jet-work, there was not one of the 141 communes of the district of M—— sur M—— which was not indebted to him for some benefit. He had even in case of need aided and quickened the business of the other districts. Thus he had, in time of need, sustained with his credit and with his own funds the tulle factory at Boulogne, the flax-spinning factory at Frévent, and the linen factory at Boubers-sur-Canche. Everywhere the name of M. Madeleine was spoken with veneration. Arras and Douai envied the lucky little city of M—— sur M—— its mayor.

The judge of the royal court of Douai, who was holding this term of the assizes at Arras, was familiar—as well as everybody else—with this name, so profoundly and so universally honored. When the officer, quietly opening the door which led from the council chamber to the court-room, bent behind the judge's chair and handed him the paper, on which was written the line we have just read, adding: "This gentleman desires to witness the trial"; the judge made a hasty movement of deference, seized a pen, wrote

a few words at the bottom of the paper and handed it back to the officer, saying to him: "Let him enter."

The unhappy man, whose history we are relating, had remained near the door of the hall, in the same place and in the same attitude as when the officer left him. He heard, through his thoughts, some one saying to him: "Will monsieur do me the honor to follow me?" It was the same officer who had turned his back upon him the minute before, and who now bowed to the earth before him. The officer at the same time handed him the paper. He unfolded it, and, as he happened to be near the lamp, he could read: "The judge of the court of assizes presents his respects to M. Madeleine."

He crushed the paper in his hands, as if those few words had left some strange and bitter taste behind.

He followed the officer.

In a few minutes he found himself alone in a kind of paneled cabinet, of a severe appearance, lighted by two wax candles placed upon a table covered with green cloth. The last words of the officer who had left him still rang in his ear: "Monsieur, you are now in the council chamber, you have but to turn the brass knob of that door and you will find yourself in the court-room, behind the judge's chair." These words were associated in his thoughts with a vague remembrance of the narrow corridors and dark stairways through which he had just passed.

The officer had left him alone. The decisive moment had arrived. He endeavored to collect his thoughts, but did not succeed. At those hours, especially when we have sorest need of grasping the sharp realities of life, do the threads of thought snap off in the brain. He was in the very place where the judges deliberate and decide. He beheld with a stupid tranquillity that silent and formidable room where so many existences had been terminated, where his own name would be heard so soon, and which his destiny was crossing at this moment. He looked at the walls, then he looked at himself, astonished that this could be this chamber and that this could be he.

He had eaten nothing for more than twenty-four hours; he was bruised by the jolting of the carriole, but he did not feel it; it seemed to him that he felt nothing.

He examined a black frame which hung on the wall, and

which contained, under glass, an old autograph letter of Jean Nicholas Pache, Mayor of Paris and Minister, dated, doubtless by mistake, *June* 9th, year II, in which Pache sent to the Commune the list of the ministers and deputies held in arrest within their limits. A spectator, had he seen and watched him then, would have imagined, doubtless, that this letter appeared very remarkable to him, for he did not take his eyes off from it, and he read it two or three times. He was reading without paying any attention, and without knowing what he was doing. He was thinking of Fantine and Cosette.

Even while musing he turned unconsciously and his eyes encountered the brass knob of the door which separated him from the hall of the assizes. He had almost forgotten that door. His countenance, at first calm, now fell. His eyes were fixed on that brass knob, then became set and wild, and, little by little, filled with dismay. Drops of sweat started out from his head and rolled down over his temples.

At one moment he made, with a kind of authority united to rebellion, that indescribable gesture which means and which so well says: "Well! who is there to compel me?" Then he turned quickly, saw before him the door by which he had entered, went to it, opened it, and went out. He was no longer in that room; he was outside, in a corridor, a long, narrow corridor, cut up with steps and side doors, making all sorts of angles, lighted here and there by lamps hung on the wall similar to nurse-lamps for the sick; it was the corridor by which he had come. He drew breath and listened; no sound behind him, no sound before him; he ran as if he were pursued.

When he had doubled several of the turns of this passage he listened again. There was still the same silence and the same shadow about him. He was out of breath; he tottered; he leaned against the wall. The stone was cold; the sweat was icy upon his forehead; he roused himself with a shudder.

Then and there, alone, standing in that obscurity, trembling with cold, and, perhaps, with something else, he reflected.

He had reflected all night; he had reflected all day; he now heard but one voice within him, which said: "Alas!"

A quarter of an hour thus rolled away. Finally, he

bowed his head, sighed with anguish, let his arms fall, and retraced his steps. He walked slowly and as if overwhelmed. It seemed as if he had been caught in his flight and brought back.

He entered the council chamber again. The first thing that he saw was the handle of the door. That handle, round and of polished brass, shone out before him like an ominous star. He looked at it as a lamb might look at the eye of a tiger.

His eyes could not move from it.

From time to time he took another step toward the door.

Had he listened he would have heard, as a kind of confused murmur, the noise of the neighboring hall; but he did not listen and he did not hear.

Suddenly, without himself knowing how, he found himself near the door; he seized the knob convulsively; the door opened.

He was in the court-room.

IX

A PLACE FOR ARRIVING AT CONVICTIONS

HE took a step, closed the door behind him mechanically, and remained standing, noting what he saw.

It was a large hall, dimly lighted, and noisy and silent by turns, where all the machinery of a criminal trial was exhibited, with its petty yet solemn gravity, before the multitude.

At one end of the hall, that at which he found himself, heedless judges, in threadbare robes, were biting their finger-nails or closing their eyelids; at the other end was a ragged rabble; there were lawyers in all sorts of attitudes; soldiers with honest and hard faces; old, stained wainscoting, a dirty ceiling, tables covered with serge, which were more nearly yellow than green; doors blackened by finger-marks; tavern lamps, giving more smoke than light, on nails in the paneling; candles in brass candlesticks on the tables; everywhere obscurity, unsightliness and gloom; and from all this there arose an austere and august impression; for men felt therein the presence of that great human thing which is called law, and that great divine thing which is called justice.

No man in this multitude paid any attention to him. All eyes converged on a single point, a wooden bench placed against a little door along the wall at the left hand of the judge. Upon this bench, which was lighted by several candles, was a man between two gendarmes.

This was the man.

He did not look for the man, he saw him. His eyes went toward him naturally, as if they had known in advance where he was.

He thought he saw himself, older, doubtless, not precisely the same in features, but alike in attitude and appearance, with that bristling hair, with those wild and restless eyeballs, with that blouse—just as he was on the day he entered D——, full of hatred, and concealing in his soul this hideous hoard of frightful thoughts which he had spent nineteen years in gathering upon the floor of the galleys.

He said to himself, with a shudder: "Great God! shall I again come to this?"

This being appeared at least sixty years old. There was something indescribably rough, stupid, and terrified in his appearance.

At the sound of the door people had stood aside to make room. The judge had turned his head, and, supposing the person who entered to be the Mayor of M—— sur M——, greeted him with a bow. The prosecuting attorney, who had seen Madeleine at M—— sur M——, whither he had been called more than once, by the duties of his office, recognized him and bowed likewise. He scarcely perceived them. He gazed about him, a prey to a sort of hallucination.

Judges, clerk, gendarmes, a throng of heads, cruelly curious—he had seen all these once before, twenty-seven years ago. He had fallen again upon these fearful things; they were before him, they moved, they had being; it was no longer an effort of his memory, a mirage of his fancy, but real gendarmes and real judges, a real throng, and real men of flesh and bone. It was done; he saw reappearing and living again around him, with all the frightfulness of reality, the monstrous visions of the past.

All this was yawning before him.

Stricken with horror, he closed his eyes, and exclaimed from the depths of his soul: "Never!"

And by a tragic sort of destiny which was agitating all his ideas and rendering him almost insane, it was another self before him. This man on trial was called by all around him Jean Valjean!

He had before his eyes an unheard-of vision, a sort of representation of the most horrible moment of his life, played by his shadow.

All, everything was there—the same paraphernalia, the same hour of the night—almost the same faces, judge and assistant judges, soldiers and spectators. But above the head of the judge was a crucifix, a thing which did not appear in the court-rooms at the time of his sentence. When he was tried, God was not there.

A chair was behind him; he sank into it, terrified at the idea that he might be observed. When seated, he took advantage of a pile of papers on the judge's desk to hide his face from the whole room. He could now see without being seen. He entered fully into the spirit of the reality; by degrees he recovered his composure, and arrived at that degree of calmness at which it is possible to listen.

M. Bamatabois was one of the jurors.

He looked for Javert, but did not see him. The witnesses' seat was hidden from him by the clerk's table. And then, as we have just said, the hall was very dimly lighted.

At the moment of his entrance the counsel for the prisoner was finishing his plea. The attention of all was excited to the highest degree; the trial had been in progress for three hours. During these three hours, the spectators had seen a man, an unknown, wretched being, thoroughly stupid or thoroughly artful, gradually bending beneath the weight of a terrible probability. This man, as is already known, was a vagrant who had been found in a field, carrying off a branch, laden with ripe apples, which had been broken from a tree in a neighboring close called the Pierron inclosure. Who was this man? An examination had been held, witnesses had been heard, they had been unanimous, light had been elicited from every portion of the trial. The prosecution said: "We have here not merely a fruit thief, a marauder; we have here, in our hands, a

bandit, an outlaw who has broken his ban, an old convict, a most dangerous wretch; a malefactor, called Jean Valjean, of whom justice has been long in pursuit, and who, eight years ago, on leaving the galleys at Toulon, committed a highway robbery, with force and arms, upon the person of a youth of Savoy, Petit Gervais by name, a crime which is specified in article 383 of the penal code, and for which we reserve the right of further prosecution when his identity shall be judicially established. He has now committed a new theft. It is a case of second offence. Convict him for the new crime; he will be tried hereafter for the previous one." Before this accusation, before the unanimity of the witnesses, the principal emotion evinced by the accused was astonishment. He made gestures and signs which signified denial, or he gazed at the ceiling. He spoke with difficulty and answered with embarrassment, but from head to foot his whole person denied the charge. He seemed like an idiot in the presence of all these intellects ranged in battle around him, and like a stranger in the midst of this society by whom he had been seized. Nevertheless, a most threatening future awaited him; probabilities increased every moment; and every spectator was looking with more anxiety than himself for the calamitous sentence which seemed to be hanging over his head with ever-increasing surety. One contingency even gave a glimpse of the possibility, beyond the galleys, of a capital penalty should his identity be established, and the Petit Gervais affair result in his conviction. Who was this man? What was the nature of his apathy? Was it imbecility or artifice? Did he know too much or nothing at all? These were questions upon which the spectators took sides and which seemed to affect the jury. There was something fearful and something mysterious in the trial; the drama was not merely gloomy, but it was obscure.

The counsel for the defence had made a very good plea in that provincial language which long constituted the eloquence of the bar, and which was formerly employed by all lawyers, at Paris, as well as at Romorantin or Montbrison, but which, having now become classic, is used by few except the official orators of the bar, to whom it is suited by its solemn rotundity and majestic periods; a language in which husband and wife are called spouses; Paris,

the centre of arts and civilization; the king, the monarch; a bishop, a holy pontiff; the prosecuting attorney, the eloquent interpreter of the vengeance of the law; arguments, the accents which we have just heard; the time of Louis XIV, the illustrious age; a theatre, the temple of Melpomene; the reigning family, the august blood of our kings; a concert, a musical solemnity; the general in command, the illustrious warrior who, etc.; students of theology, those tender Levites; mistakes imputed to newspapers, the imposture which distils its venom into the columns of these organs, etc. The counsel for the defence had begun by expatiating on the theft of the apples, a thing ill-suited to a lofty style, but benign Bossuet himself was once compelled to make allusion to a hen in the midst of a funeral oration and acquitted himself with dignity. The counsel established that the theft of the apples was not, in fact, proved. His client, whom in his character of counsel he persisted in calling Champmathieu, had not been seen to scale the wall or break off the branch. He had been arrested in possession of this branch (which the counsel preferred to call *bough*); but he said that he had found it on the ground. Where was the proof to the contrary? Undoubtedly this branch had been broken and carried off after the scaling of the wall, then thrown away by the alarmed marauder; undoubtedly there had been a thief. But what evidence was there that this thief was Champmathieu? One single thing: that he was formerly a convict. The counsel would not deny that this fact unfortunately appeared to be fully proved; the defendant had resided at Faverolles; the defendant had been a pruner; the name of Champmathieu might well have had its origin in that of Jean Mathieu; all this was true, and finally four witnesses had positively and without hesitation identified Champmathieu as the galley slave Jean Valjean; to these circumstances and this testimony the counsel could oppose nothing but the denial of his client, an interested denial; but even supposing him to be the convict Jean Valjean, did this prove that he had stolen the apples? That was a presumption, at most, not a proof. The accused, it was true, and the counsel "in good faith" must admit it, had adopted "a mistaken system of defence." He had persisted in denying everything, both the theft and the fact

that he had been a convict. An avowal on the latter point would have been better certainly, and would have secured to him the indulgence of the judges; the counsel had advised him to this course, but the defendant had obstinately refused, expecting, probably, to escape punishment entirely by admitting nothing. It was a mistake, but must not the poverty of his intellect be taken into consideration? The man was evidently imbecile. Long suffering in the galleys, long suffering out of the galleys, had brutalized him, etc. If he made a bad defence, was this a reason for convicting him? As to the Petit Gervais affair, the counsel had nothing to say, it was not in the case. He concluded by entreating the jury and court, if the identity of Jean Valjean appeared evident to them, to apply to him the police penalties prescribed for the breaking of ban and not the fearful punishment decreed to the convict found guilty of a second offence.

The prosecuting attorney replied to the counsel for the defence. He was violent and flowery, like most prosecuting attorneys.

He complimented the counsel for his "frankness," of which he shrewdly took advantage. He attacked the accused through all the concessions which his counsel had made. The counsel seemed to admit that the accused was Jean Valjean. He accepted the admission. This man, then, was Jean Valjean. This fact was conceded to the prosecution and could be no longer contested. Here, by an adroit autonomasia, going back to the sources and causes of crime, the prosecuting attorney thundered against the immorality of the romantic school—then in its dawn, under the name of the "Satanic school," conferred upon it by the critics of the "Quotidienne" and the "Oriflamme"; and he attributed, not without plausibility, to the influence of this perverse literature the crime of Champmathieu, or rather of Jean Valjean. These considerations exhausted, he passed to Jean Valjean himself. Who was Jean Valjean? Description of Jean Valjean: A monster vomited, etc. The model of all such descriptions may be found in the story of Théramène, which as tragedy is useless, but which does great service in judicial eloquence every day. The auditory and the jury "shuddered." This description finished, the prosecuting attorney resumed with an oratori-

cal burst, designed to excite the enthusiasm of the "Journal de la Préfecture" to the highest pitch next morning. "And it is such a man," etc. "A vagabond, a mendicant, without means of existence," etc. "Accustomed through his existence to criminal acts and profiting little by his past life in the galleys, as is proved by the crime committed upon Petit Gervais," etc. "It is such a man who, found on the highway in the very act of theft, a few paces from a wall that had been scaled, still holding in his hand the subject of his crime, denies the act in which he is caught, denies the theft, denies the escalade, denies everything, denies even his name, denies even his identity! Besides a hundred other proofs, to which we will not return, he is identified by four witnesses—Javert—the incorruptible inspector of police, Javert—and three of his former companions in disgrace, the convicts Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochepaille. What has he to oppose to this overwhelming unanimity? His denial. What depravity! You will do justice, gentlemen of the jury," etc. While the prosecuting attorney was speaking the accused listened open-mouthed with a sort of astonishment, not unmingled with admiration. He was evidently surprised that a man could speak so well. From time to time, at the most "forcible" parts of the argument, at those moments when eloquence, unable to contain itself, overflows in a stream of withering epithets and surrounds the prisoner like a tempest, he slowly moved his head from right to left and from left to right—a sort of sad, mute protest with which he contented himself from the beginning of the argument. Two or three times the spectators nearest him heard him say, in a low tone: "This all comes from not asking for M. Baloup!" The prosecuting attorney pointed out to the jury this air of stupidity, which was evidently put on and which denoted, not imbecility, but address, artifice, and the habit of deceiving justice, and which showed in its full light the "deep-rooted perversity" of the man. He concluded by reserving entirely the Petit Gervais affair and demanding a sentence to the full extent of the law.

This was, for this offence, as will be remembered, hard labor for life.

The counsel for the prisoner rose, commenced by complimenting "M. Prosecuting Attorney, on his admirable

argument," then replied as best he could, but in a weaker tone; the ground was evidently giving way under him.

X

THE SYSTEM OF DENEGATIONS

THE time had come for closing the case. The judge commanded the accused to rise and put the usual question: "Have you anything to add to your defence?"

The man, standing and twirling in his hands a hideous cap which he had, seemed not to hear.

The judge repeated the question.

This time the man heard and appeared to comprehend. He started like one awaking from sleep, cast his eyes around him, looked at the spectators, the gendarmes, his counsel, the jurors, and the court, placed his huge fist on the bar before him, looked around again, and suddenly fixing his eyes upon the prosecuting attorney began to speak. It was like an eruption. It seemed from the manner in which the words escaped his lips, incoherent, impetuous, jostling each other pell-mell, as if they were all eager to find vent at the same time. He said: "I have this to say: That I have been a wheelwright at Paris; that it was at M. Baloup's, too. It is a hard life to be a wheelwright; you always work outdoors, in yards, under sheds when you have good bosses, never in shops, because you must have room, you see. In the winter it is so cold that you thresh your arms to warm them; but the bosses won't allow that; they say it is waste of time. It is tough work to handle iron when there is ice on the pavements. It wears a man out quick. You get old when you are young at this trade. A man is used up by forty. I was fifty-three; I was sick a good deal. And then the workmen are so bad! When a poor fellow isn't young they always call you old bird and old beast! I earned only 30 sous a day, they paid me as little as they could—the bosses took advantage of my age. Then I had my daughter, who was a washerwoman at the river. She earned a little for herself; between us two we got on; she had hard work, too. All day long up to the waist in a tub, in rain, in snow, with wind that cuts your face when it freezes, it is all the same, the washing must be done. There are folks who haven't much linen and are

waiting for it; if you don't wash you lose your customers. The planks are not well matched and the water falls on you everywhere. You get your clothes wet through and through; that strikes in. She washed, too, in the laundry of the Enfants-Rouges, where the water comes in through pipes. There you are not in the tub. You wash before you under the pipe and rinse behind you in the trough. This is under cover and you are not so cold. But there is a hot lye that is terrible and ruins your eyes. She would come home at seven o'clock at night and go to bed right away, she was so tired. Her husband used to beat her. She is dead. We wasn't very happy. She was a good girl; she never went to balls, and was very quiet. I remember one Shrove Tuesday she went to bed at eight o'clock. Look here, I am telling the truth. You have only to ask if it isn't so. Ask! how stupid I am! Paris is a gulf. Who is there that knows Father Champmathieu? But there is M. Baloup. Go and see M. Baloup. I don't know what more you want of me."

The man ceased speaking, but did not sit down. He had uttered these sentences in a loud, rapid, hoarse, harsh and guttural tone, with a sort of angry and savage simplicity. Once he stopped to bow to somebody in the crowd. The sort of affirmations which he seemed to fling haphazard came from him like hiccoughs and he added to each the gesture of a man chopping wood. When he had finished the auditory burst into laughter. He looked at them, and, seeing them laughing and not knowing why, began to laugh himself.

That was an ill-omen.

The judge, a considerate and kindly man, raised his voice:

He reminded "gentlemen of the jury" that M. Baloup, the former master wheelwright by whom the prisoner said he had been employed, had been summoned, but had not appeared. He had become bankrupt and could not be found. Then, turning to the accused, he adjured him to listen to what he was about to say, and added: "You are in a position which demands reflection. The gravest presumptions are weighing against you and may lead to fatal results. Prisoner, on your own behalf, I question you a second time; explain yourself clearly on these two points:

First, did you or did you not climb the wall of the Pierron close, break off the branch and steal the apples, that is to say, commit the crime of theft, with the addition of breaking into an inclosure? Second, are you or are you not the discharged convict, Jean Valjean?"

The prisoner shook his head with a knowing look, like a man who understands perfectly and knows what he is going to say. He opened his mouth, turned toward the presiding judge, and said: "In the first place—"

Then he looked at his cap, looked up at the ceiling, and was silent.

"Prisoner," resumed the prosecuting attorney in an austere tone, "give attention. You have replied to nothing that has been asked you. Your agitation condemns you. It is evident that your name is not Champmathieu, but that you are the convict Jean Valjean, disguised under the name at first of Jean Mathieu, which was that of his mother; that you have lived in Auvergne; that you were born at Faverolles, where you were a pruner. It is evident that you have stolen ripe apples from the Pierron close, with the addition of breaking into the inclosure. The gentlemen of the jury will consider this."

The accused had at last resumed his seat; he rose abruptly when the prosecuting attorney had ended, and exclaimed: "You are a very bad man—you, I mean. This is what I wanted to say. I couldn't think of it first off. I never stole anything. I am a man who don't get something to eat every day. I was coming from Ailly, walking alone after a shower, which had made the ground all yellow with mud, so that the ponds were running over and you only saw little sprigs of grass sticking out of the sand along the road, and I found a broken branch on the ground with apples on it; and I picked it up, not knowing what trouble it would give me. It is three months that I have been in prison, being knocked about. More'n that I can't tell. You talk against me and tell me 'answer'! The gendarme, who is a good fellow, nudges my elbow and whispers, 'answer now.' I can't explain myself; I never studied—I am a poor man. You are all wrong not to see that I didn't steal. I picked up off the ground things that was there. You talk about Jean Valjean, Jean Mathieu—I don't know any such people. They must be

villagers. I have worked for M. Baloup, Boulevard de l'Hospital. My name is Champmathieu. You must be very sharp to tell me where I was born. I don't know myself. Everybody can't have houses to be born in; that would be too handy. I think my father and mother were strollers, but I don't know. When I was a child they called me 'Little One'; now they call me 'Old Man.' They're my Christian names. Take them as you like. I have been in Auvergne, I have been at Faverolles. Bless me! can't a man be in Auvergne and Faverolles without having been at the galleys? I tell you I never stole, and that I am Father Champmathieu. I have been at M. Baloup's. I lived in his house. I am tired of your everlasting nonsense. What is everybody after me for like a mad-dog?"

The prosecuting attorney was still standing; he addressed the judge: "Sir, in the presence of the confused but very adroit denegations of the accused, who endeavors to pass for an idiot, but who will not succeed in it—we will prevent him—we request that it may please you and the court to call again within the bar the convicts Brevet, Cochepaille, and Chenildieu, and Police Inspector Javert, and to submit them to a final interrogation concerning the identity of the accused with the convict Jean Valjean."

"I must remind the prosecuting attorney," said the presiding judge, "that Police Inspector Javert, recalled by his duties to the chief town of a neighboring district, left the hall and the city also as soon as his testimony was taken. We granted him this permission with the consent of the prosecuting attorney and the counsel of the accused."

"True," replied the prosecuting attorney; "in the absence of M. Javert, I think it a duty to recall to the gentlemen of the jury what he said here a few hours ago. Javert is an estimable man, who does honor to inferior but important functions by his rigorous and strict probity. These are the terms in which he testified: 'I do not even need moral presumptions and material proofs to contradict the denials of the accused. I recognize him perfectly. This man's name is not Champmathieu; he is a convict, Jean Valjean, very hard, and much feared. He was liberated at the expiration of his term, but with extreme regret. He served out nineteen years at hard labor for

burglary; five or six times he attempted to escape. Besides the Petit Gervais and Pierron robberies, I suspect him also of a robbery committed on his highness the late Bishop of D——. I often saw him when I was adjutant of the galley guard at Toulon. I repeat it; I recognize him perfectly.'"

This declaration, in terms so precise, appeared to produce a strong impression upon the public and jury. The prosecuting attorney concluded by insisting that, in the absence of Javert, the three witnesses—Brevet, Chenildieu, and Cochepaille—should be heard anew and solemnly interrogated.

The judge gave an order to an officer, and a moment afterward the door of the witness-room opened, and the officer, accompanied by a gendarme ready to lend assistance, led in the convict Brevet. The audience was in breathless suspense, and all hearts palpitated as if they contained but a single soul.

The old convict Brevet was clad in the black and gray jacket of the central prisons. Brevet was about sixty years old; he had the face of a man of business and the air of a rogue. They sometimes go together. He had become something like a turnkey in the prison—to which he had been brought by new misdeeds. He was one of those men of whom their superiors are wont to say: "He tries to make himself useful." The chaplain bore good testimony to his religious habits. It must not be forgotten that this happened under the Restoration.

"Brevet," said the judge; "you have suffered infamous punishment and can not take an oath."

Brevet cast down his eyes.

"Nevertheless," continued the judge, "even in the man whom the law has degraded there may remain, if divine justice permit, a sentiment of honor and equity. To that sentiment I appeal in this decisive hour. If it still exists in you, as I hope, reflect before you answer me; consider on the one hand this man, whom a word from you may destroy; on the other hand justice, which a word from you may enlighten. The moment is a solemn one, and there is still time to retract if you think yourself mistaken. Prisoner, rise. Brevet, look well upon the prisoner; collect your remembrances, and say, on your soul and conscience,

whether you still recognize this man as your former comrade in the galleys, Jean Valjean."

Brevet looked at the prisoner, then turned again to the court.

"Yes, your honor; I was the first to recognize him, and still do so. This man is Jean Valjean, who came to Toulon in 1796 and left in 1815. I left a year after. He looks like a brute now, but he must have grown stupid with age; at the galleys he was sullen. I recognize him now, positively."

"Sit down," said the judge. "Prisoner, remain standing."

Chenildieu was brought in, a convict for life, as was shown by his red cloak and green cap. He was undergoing his punishment in the galleys of Toulon, whence he had been brought for this occasion. He was a little man, about fifty years old, active, wrinkled, lean, yellow, brazen, restless, with a sort of sickly feebleness in his limbs and whole person, and immense force in his eye. His companions in the galleys had nicknamed him Je-nie-Dieu.

The judge addressed nearly the same words to him as to Brevet. When he reminded him that his infamy had deprived him of the right to take an oath, Chenildieu raised his head and looked the spectators in the face. The judge requested him to collect his thoughts, and asked him, as he had Brevet, whether he still recognized the prisoner.

Chenildieu burst out laughing.

"Gad! do I recognize him? We were five years on the same chain. You're sulky with me, are you, old boy?"

"Sit down," said the judge.

The officer brought in Cochepaille; this other convict for life, brought from the galleys and dressed in red like Chenildieu, was a peasant from Lourdes, and a semi-bear of the Pyrenees. He had tended flocks in the mountains, and from shepherd had glided into brigandage. Cochepaille was not less uncouth than the accused, and appeared still more stupid. He was one of those unfortunate men whom nature turns out as wild beasts, and society finishes up into galley slaves.

The judge attempted to move him by a few serious and pathetic words, and asked him, as he had the others, whether he still recognized, without hesitation or difficulty, the man standing before him.

"It is Jean Valjean," said Cochepaille. "The same they call Jean-the-Jack, he was so strong."

Each of the affirmations of these three men, evidently sincere and in good faith, had excited in the audience a murmur of evil augury for the accused—a murmur which increased in force and continuance every time a new declaration was added to the preceding one. The prisoner himself listened to them with that astonished countenance which, according to the prosecution, was his principal means of defence. At the first, the gendarmes by his side heard him mutter between his teeth: "Ah, well! there is one of them!" After the second, he said in a louder tone, with an air almost of satisfaction: "Good!" At the third, he exclaimed: "Famous!"

The judge addressed him: "Prisoner, you have listened. What have you to say?"

He replied: "I say—famous!"

A buzz ran through the crowd and almost invaded the jury. It was evident that the man was lost.

"Officers," said the judge, "enforce order. I am about to sum up the case."

At this moment there was a movement near the judge. A voice was heard, exclaiming: "Brevet, Chenildieu, Cochepaille, look this way!"

So lamentable and terrible was this voice, that those who heard it felt their blood run cold. All eyes turned toward the spot whence it came. A man who had been sitting among the privileged spectators behind the court had risen, pushed open the low door which separated the tribunal from the bar, and was standing in the centre of the hall. The judge, the prosecuting attorney, M. Bamatabois, twenty persons recognized him, and exclaimed at once: "M. Madeleine!"

XI

CHAMPMATHIEU MORE AND MORE ASTONISHED

IT was he, indeed. The clerk's lamp lighted up his face. He held his hat in hand; there was no disorder in his dress; his overcoat was carefully buttoned. He was very pale, and trembled slightly. His hair, already gray when he came to Arras, was now perfectly white. It had be-

come so during the hour that he had been there. All eyes were strained toward him.

The sensation was indescribable. There was a moment of hesitation in the auditory. The voice had been so thrilling, the man standing there appeared so calm, that at first nobody could comprehend it. They asked who had cried out. They could not believe that this tranquil man had uttered that fearful cry.

This indecision lasted but a few seconds. Before even the judge and prosecuting attorney could say a word, before the gendarmes and officers could make a sign, the man whom all up to this moment called M. Madeleine had advanced toward the witnesses, Cochepaille, Brevet, and Chenildieu.

"Do you not recognize me?" said he.

All three stood confounded, and indicated by a shake of the head that they did not know him. Cochepaille, intimidated, gave him the military salute. M. Madeleine turned toward the jurors and court, and said, in a mild voice: "Gentlemen of the jury, release the accused. Your honor, order my arrest. He is not the man whom you seek; it is I. I am Jean Valjean."

Not a breath stirred. To the first commotion of astonishment had succeeded a sepulchral silence. That species of religious awe was felt in the hall which thrills the multitude at the accomplishment of a grand action.

Nevertheless, the face of the judge was marked with sympathy and sadness; he exchanged glances with the prosecuting attorney, and a few whispered words with the assistant judges. He turned to the spectators and asked in a tone which was understood by all: "Is there a physician here?"

The prosecuting attorney continued: "Gentlemen of the jury, the strange and unexpected incident which disturbs the audience inspires us, as well as yourselves, with a feeling which we have no need to express. You all know, at least by reputation, the honorable M. Madeleine, Mayor of M—— sur M——. If there be a physician in the audience, we unite with his honor the judge in entreating him to be kind enough to lend his assistance to M. Madeleine and conduct him to his residence."

M. Madeleine did not permit the prosecuting attorney to

finish, but interrupted him with a tone full of gentleness and authority. These are the words he uttered; we give them literally, as they were written down immediately after the trial by one of the witnesses of the scene—as they still ring in the ears of those who heard them, now nearly forty years ago.

"I thank you, M. Prosecuting Attorney, but I am not mad. You shall see. You were on the point of committing a great mistake; release that man. I am accomplishing a duty; I am the unhappy convict. I am the only one who sees clearly here, and I tell you the truth. What I do at this moment God beholds from on high, and that is sufficient. You can take me, since I am here. Nevertheless, I have done my best. I have disguised myself under another name, I have become rich, I have become mayor, I have desired to enter again among honest men. It seems that this can not be. In short, there are many things which I can not tell. I shall not relate to you the story of my life, some day you will know it. I did rob Mgr. l'Bishop—that is true; I did rob Petit Gervais—that is true. They were right in telling you that Jean Valjean was a wicked wretch. But all the blame may not belong to him. Listen, your honors; a man so abased as I has no remonstrance to make with Providence, nor advice to give to society; but, mark you, the infamy from which I have sought to rise is pernicious to me. The galleys make the galley slave. Receive this in kindness if you will. Before the galleys I was a poor peasant, unintelligent, a species of idiot; the galleys changed me. I was stupid, I became wicked; I was a log, I became a fire-brand. Later, I was saved by indulgence and kindness, as I had been lost by severity. But, pardon, you can not comprehend what I say. You will find in my house, among the ashes of the fireplace, the 40-sou piece of which, seven years ago, I robbed Petit Gervais. I have nothing more to add. Take me. Great God! the prosecuting attorney shakes his head. You say: 'M. Madeleine has gone mad'; you do not believe me. This is hard to be borne. Do not condemn that man at least. What! these men do not know me? Would that Javert were here. He would recognize me!"

Nothing could express the kindly yet terrible melancholy of the tone which accompanied these words.

He turned to the three convicts.

"Well! I recognize you, Brevet, do you remember—"

He paused, hesitated a moment, and said: "Do you remember those checkered, knit suspenders that you had in the galleys?"

Brevet started as if struck with surprise, and gazed wildly at him from head to foot. He continued: "Chenildieu, surnamed by yourself Je-nie-Dieu, the whole of your left shoulder has been burned deeply, from laying it one day on a chafing-dish full of embers, to efface the three letters T. F. P., which yet are still to be seen there. Answer me, is this true?"

"It is true!" said Chenildieu.

He turned to Cochepaille: "Cochepaille, you have on your left arm, near where you have been bled, a date put in blue letters with burned powder. It is the date of the landing of the Emperor at Cannes, *March* 1, 1815. Lift up your sleeve."

Cochepaille lifted up his sleeve; all eyes around him were turned to his naked arm. A gendarme brought a lamp; the date was there.

The unhappy man turned toward the audience and the court with a smile, the thought of which still rends the hearts of those who witnessed it. It was the smile of triumph; it was also the smile of despair.

"You see clearly," said he, "that I am Jean Valjean."

There were no longer either judges, or accusers, or gendarmes in the hall; there were only fixed eyes and beating hearts. Nobody remembered longer the part which he had to play; the prosecuting attorney forgot that he was there to prosecute, the judge that he was there to preside, the counsel for the defence that he was there to defend. Strange to say no question was put, no authority intervened. It is the peculiarity of sublime spectacles that they take possession of every soul, and make of every witness a spectator. Nobody, perhaps, was positively conscious of what he experienced; and, undoubtedly, nobody said to himself that he there beheld the effulgence of a great light, yet all felt dazzled at heart.

It was evident that Jean Valjean was before their eyes. That fact shone forth. The appearance of this man had been enough fully to clear up the case, so obscure a mo-

ment before. Without need of any further explanation, the multitude, as by a sort of electric revelation, comprehended instantly, and at a single glance, this simple and magnificent story of a man giving himself up that another might not be condemned in his place. The details, the hesitation, the slight reluctance possible were lost in this immense, luminous fact.

It was an impression which quickly passed over, but for the moment it was irresistible.

"I will not disturb the proceeding further," continued Jean Valjean. "I am going, since I am not arrested. I have many things to do. M. Prosecuting Attorney knows where I am going, and will have me arrested when he chooses."

He walked toward the outer door. Not a voice was raised, not an arm stretched out to prevent him. All stood aside. There was at this moment an indescribable divinity within him which makes the multitude fall back and make way before a man. He passed through the throng with slow steps. It was never known who opened the door, but it is certain that the door was open when he came to it. On reaching it he turned and said: "M. Prosecuting Attorney, I remain at your disposal."

He then addressed himself to the auditory.

"You all, all who are here, think me worthy of pity, do you not? Great God! when I think of what I have been on the point of doing, I think myself worthy of envy. Still, would that all this had not happened!"

He went out, and the door closed as it had opened, for those who do deeds sovereignly great are always sure of being served by somebody in the multitude.

Less than an hour afterward the verdict of the jury discharged from all accusation the said Champmathieu; and Champmathieu, set at liberty forthwith, went his way stupefied, thinking all men mad, and understanding nothing of this vision.

BOOK EIGHTH—COUNTER-STROKE

I

IN WHAT MIRROR M. MADELEINE LOOKED AT HIS HAIR

DAY began to dawn. Fantine had had a feverish and sleepless night, yet full of happy visions; she fell asleep at daybreak. Sister Simplice, who had watched with her, took advantage of this slumber to go and prepare a new potion of quinine. The good sister had been for a few moments in the laboratory of the infirmary, bending over her vials and drugs, looking at them very closely on account of the mist which the dawn casts over all objects, when suddenly she turned her head and uttered a faint cry. M. Madeleine stood before her. He had just come in silently.

"You, M. l'Mayor!" she exclaimed.

"How is the poor woman?" he answered, in a low voice.

"Better just now. But we have been very anxious indeed."

She explained what had happened, that Fantine had been very ill the night before, but was now better, because she believed that the mayor had gone to Montfermeil for her child. The sister dared not question the mayor, but she saw clearly from his manner that he had not come from that place.

"That is well," said he. "You did right not to deceive her."

"Yes," returned the sister, "but now, M. l'Mayor, when she sees you without her child what shall we tell her?"

He reflected for a moment, then said: "God will inspire us."

"But we can not tell her a lie," murmured the sister, in a smothered tone.

The broad daylight streamed into the room and lighted up the face of M. Madeleine.

The sister happened to raise her eyes.

"Oh God, monsieur," she exclaimed. "What has befallen you? Your hair is all white!"

"White!" said he.

Sister Simplice had no mirror; she rummaged in a case of instruments and found a little glass which the physician of the infirmary used to discover whether the breath had left the body of a patient. M. Madeleine took the glass, looked at his hair, and said: "Indeed!"

He spoke the word with indifference as if thinking of something else.

The sister felt chilled by an unknown something of which she caught a glimpse in all this.

He asked: "Can I see her?"

"Will not M. l'Mayor bring back her child?" asked the sister, scarcely daring to venture a question.

"Certainly, but two or three days are necessary."

"If she does not see M. l'Mayor here," continued the sister timidly, "she will not know that he has returned; it will be easy for her to have patience, and when the child comes she will think naturally that M. l'Mayor has just arrived with her. Then you will not have to tell her a falsehood."

M. Madeleine seemed to reflect for a few moments, then said, with his calm gravity: "No, my sister, I must see her. Perhaps I have not much time."

The nun did not seem to notice this "perhaps," which gave an obscure and singular significance to the words of M. l'Mayor. She answered, lowering her eyes and voice respectfully: "In that case, she is asleep, but monsieur can go in."

He made a few remarks about a door that shut with difficulty, the noise of which might awaken the sick woman; then entered the chamber of Fantine, approached her bed, and opened the curtains. She was sleeping. Her breath came from her chest with that tragic sound which is peculiar to these diseases, and which rends the heart of unhappy mothers watching the slumbers of their fated children. But this labored respiration scarcely disturbed an ineffable serenity, which overshadowed her countenance and transfigured her in her sleep. Her pallor had become whiteness and her cheeks were glowing. Her long, fair eyelashes, the only beauty left to her of her maidenhood and youth, quivered as they lay closed upon her cheek. Her whole person trembled as if with the fluttering of wings which were felt, but could not be seen, and which

seemed about to unfold and bear her away. To see her thus no one could have believed that her life was despaired of. She looked more as if about to soar away than to die.

The stem, when the hand is stretched out to pluck the flower, quivers, and it seems at once to shrink back and present itself. The human body has something of this trepidation at the moment when the mysterious fingers of death are about to gather the soul.

M. Madeleine remained for some time motionless near the bed, looking by turns at the patient and the crucifix, as he had done two months before, on the day when he came for the first time to see her in this asylum. They were still there, both in the same attitude, she sleeping, he praying; only now, after these two months had rolled away, her hair was gray and his was white.

The sister had not entered with him. He stood by the bed, with his fingers on his lips, as if there were some one in the room to silence. She opened her eyes, saw him, and said tranquilly, with a smile: "And Cosette?"

II

FANTINE HAPPY

SHE did not start with surprise or joy; she was joy itself. The simple question: "And Cosette?" was asked with such deep faith, with so much certainty, with so complete an absence of disquiet or doubt, that he could find no word in reply. She continued: "I knew that you were there; I was asleep, but I saw you. I have seen you for a long time; I have followed you with my eyes the whole night. You were in a halo of glory, and all manner of celestial forms were hovering around you!"

He raised his eyes toward the crucifix.

"But tell me, where is Cosette?" she resumed. "Why not put her on my bed that I might see her the instant I awaken?"

He answered something mechanically, which he could never afterward recall.

Happily, the physician had come and had been apprised of this. He came to the aid of M. Madeleine.

"My child," said he, "be calm, your daughter is here."

The eyes of Fantine beamed with joy and lighted up her whole countenance. She clasped her hands with an expression full of the most violent and most gentle entreaty.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "bring her to me!"

Touching illusion of the mother. Cosette was still to her a little child to be carried in the arms.

"Not yet," continued the physician, "not at this moment. You have some fever still. The sight of your child will agitate you and make you worse. We must cure you first."

She interrupted him impetuously.

"But I am cured! I tell you I am cured! Is this physician a fool? I will see my child!"

"You see how you are carried away!" said the physician. "So long as you are in this state I can not let you have your child. It is not enough to see her, you must live for her. When you are reasonable I will bring her to you myself."

The poor mother bowed her head.

"Sir, I ask your pardon. I sincerely ask your pardon. Once I would not have spoken as I have now, but so many misfortunes have befallen me that sometimes I do not know what I am saying. I understand, you fear excitement; I will wait as long as you wish, but I am sure that it will not harm me to see my daughter. I see her now; I have not taken my eyes from her since last night. Let them bring her to me now and I will just speak to her very gently. That is all. Is it not very natural that I should wish to see my child, when they have been to Montfermeil on purpose to bring her to me? I am not angry. I know that I am going to be very happy. All night I saw figures in white smiling on me. As soon as the doctor pleases he can bring Cosette. My fever is gone, for I am cured; I feel that there is scarcely anything the matter with me; but I will act as if I were ill, and do not stir so as to please the ladies here. When they see that I am calm they will say: 'You must give her the child.' "

M. Madeleine was sitting in a chair by the side of the bed. She turned toward him and made visible efforts to appear calm and "very good," as she said, in that weakness of disease which resembles childhood, so that, seeing her so peaceful, there should be no objection to bringing her Cosette. Nevertheless, although restraining herself,

she could not help addressing a thousand questions to M. Madeleine.

"Did you have a pleasant journey, M. l'Mayor? Oh! how good you have been to go for her. Tell me only how she is! Did she bear the journey well? Ah! she will not know me. In all this time she has forgotten me, poor kitten! Children have no memory. They are like birds. To-day they see one thing and to-morrow another and remember nothing. Tell me only, were her clothes clean? Did those Thenardiers keep her neat? How did they feed her? Oh, if you knew how I have suffered in asking myself all these things in the time of my wretchedness! Now it is past! I am happy. Oh, how I want to see her. M. l'Mayor, did you think her pretty? Is not my daughter beautiful? You must have been very cold in the diligence. Could they not bring her here for one little moment? They might take her away immediately. Say, you are master here, are you willing?"

He took her hand. "Cosette is beautiful," said he. "Cosette is well; you shall see her soon, but be quiet. You talk too fast, and then you throw your arms out of bed, which makes you cough."

In fact, coughing fits interrupted Fantine at almost every word.

She did not murmur; she feared that by too eager entreaties she had weakened the confidence which she wished to inspire and began to talk about indifferent subjects.

"Montfermeil is a pretty place, is it not? In summer people go there on pleasure parties. Do the Thenardiers do a good business? Not many great people pass through that country. Their inn is a kind of chop-house."

M. Madeleine still held her hand and looked at her with anxiety. It was evident that he had come to tell her things before which his mind now hesitated. The physician had made his visit and retired. Sister Simplice alone remained with them.

But in the midst of this silence Fantine cried out: "I hear her! Oh, darling! I hear her!"

There was a child playing in the court—the child of the portress or some workwoman. It was one of those chances which are always met with and which seem to make part of the mysterious representation of tragic events. The

child, which was a little girl, was running up and down to keep herself warm, singing and laughing in a loud voice. Alas! with what are not the plays of children mingled! Fantine had heard this little girl singing.

"Oh!" said she, "it is my Cosette! I know her voice!"

The child departed as she had come and the voice died away. Fantine listened for some time. A shadow came over her face and M. Madeleine heard her whisper: "How wicked it is of that doctor not to let me see my child! That man has a bad face!"

But yet her happy train of thought returned. With her head on the pillow she continued to talk to herself. "How happy we shall be! We will have a little garden in the first place; M. Madeleine has promised it to me. My child will play in the garden. She must know her letters now. I will teach her to spell. She will chase the butterflies in the grass and I will watch her. Then there will be her first communion. Ah! when will her first communion be?"

She began to count on her fingers.

"One, two, three, four. She is seven years old. In five years. She will have a white veil and open-worked stockings and will look like a little lady. Oh, my good sister, you do not know how foolish I am; here I am thinking of my child's first communion."

And she began to laugh.

He had let go the hand of Fantine. He listened to the words as one listens to the wind that blows, his eyes on the ground and his mind plunged into unfathomable reflections. Suddenly she ceased speaking and raised her head mechanically. Fantine had become appalling.

She did not speak; she did not breathe; she half-raised herself in the bed, the covering fell from her emaciated shoulders; her countenance, radiant a moment before, became livid and her eyes, dilated with terror, seemed to fasten on something before her at the other end of the room.

"Good God!" exclaimed he. "What is the matter, Fantine?"

She did not answer; she did not take her eyes from the object which she seemed to see, but touched his arm with one hand and with the other made a sign to him to look behind him.

He turned and saw Javert.

III

JAVERT SATISFIED

LET us see what had happened.

The half-hour after midnight was striking when M. Madeleine left the hall of the Arras assizes. He had returned to his inn just in time to take the mail-coach in which, it will be remembered, he had retained his seat. A little before six o'clock in the morning he had reached M—— sur M——, where his first care had been to post his letter to M. Laffitte, then to go to the infirmary and visit Fantine.

Meanwhile, he had scarcely left the hall of the court of assizes when the prosecuting attorney, recovering from his first shock, addressed the court, deploring the insanity of the honorable mayor of M—— sur M——, declaring that his convictions were in nowise modified by this singular incident, which would be explained hereafter, and demanding the conviction of this Champmathieu, who was evidently the real Jean Valjean.

The persistence of the prosecuting attorney was visibly in contradiction to the sentiment of all—the public, the court, and the jury. The counsel for the defence had little difficulty in answering this harangue and establishing that in consequence of the revelations of M. Madeleine—that is, of the real Jean Valjean—the aspect of the case was changed, entirely changed, from top to bottom, and that the jury now had before them an innocent man. The counsel drew from this a few passionate appeals, unfortunately not very new, in regard to judicial errors, etc.; the judge, in his summing up, sided with the defence, and the jury after a few moments' consultation acquitted Champmathieu.

But yet the prosecuting attorney must have a Jean Valjean; and having lost Champmathieu he took Madeleine.

Immediately upon the discharge of Champmathieu the prosecuting attorney closeted himself with the judge.

The subject of their conference was: "Of the necessity of the arrest of the person of M. l'Mayor of M—— sur M——."

This sentence, in which there is a great deal of *of*, is

the prosecuting attorney's, written by his own hand, on the minutes of his report to the attorney-general.

The first sensation being over, the judge made few objections. Justice must take its course. Then, to confess the truth, although the judge was a kind man, and really intelligent, he was at the same time a strong, almost a zealous royalist, and had been shocked when the mayor of M—— sur M——, in speaking of the debarkation at Cannes, said the *Emperor* instead of *Bonaparte*.

The order of arrest was therefore granted. The prosecuting attorney sent it to M—— sur M—— by a courier, at full speed, to Police Inspector Javert.

It will be remembered that Javert had returned to M—— sur M—— immediately after giving his testimony.

Javert was just rising when the courier brought him the warrant and order of arrest.

The courier was himself a policeman and an intelligent man; who, in three words, acquainted Javert with what had happened at Arras.

The order of arrest, signed by the prosecuting attorney, was couched in these terms: "Inspector Javert will seize the body of Sieur Madeleine, Mayor of M—— sur M——, who has this day been identified in court as the discharged convict, Jean Valjean."

One who did not know Javert, on seeing him as he entered the hall of the infirmary, could have divined nothing of what was going on, and would have thought his manner the most natural imaginable. He was cool, calm, grave; his gray hair lay perfectly smooth over his temples, and he had ascended the stairway with his customary deliberation. But one who knew him thoroughly and examined him with attention would have shuddered. The buckle of his leather cravat, instead of being on the back of his neck, was under his left ear. This denoted an unheard-of agitation.

Javert was a complete character, without a wrinkle in his duty or his uniform, methodical with villains, rigid with the buttons of his coat.

For him to misplace the buckle of his cravat he must have received one of those shocks which may well be the earthquakes of the soul.

He came unostentatiously, had taken a corporal and four

soldiers from a station-house near by, had left the soldiers in the court, and had been shown to Fantine's chamber by the portress, without suspicion, accustomed as she was to see armed men asking for the mayor.

On reaching the room of Fantine Javert turned the key, pushed open the door with the gentleness of a sick-nurse, or a police spy, and entered.

Properly speaking, he did not enter. He remained standing in the half-opened door, his hat on his head, and his left hand in his overcoat, which was buttoned to the chin. In the bend of his elbow might be seen the leaden head of his enormous cane, which disappeared behind him.

He remained thus for nearly a minute, unperceived. Suddenly Fantine raised her eyes, saw him, and caused M. Madeleine to turn round.

At the moment when the glance of Madeleine encountered that of Javert, Javert, without stirring, without moving, without approaching, became terrible. No human feeling can ever be so appalling as joy.

It was the face of a demon who had again found his victim.

The certainty that he had caught Jean Valjean at last brought forth upon his countenance all that was in his soul. The disturbed depths rose to the surface. The humiliation of having lost the scent for a little while, of having been mistaken for a few moments concerning Champmathieu, was lost in the pride of having divined so well at first and having so long retained a true instinct. The satisfaction of Javert shone forth in his commanding attitude. The deformity of triumph spread over his narrow forehead. It was the fullest development of horror that a gratified face can show.

Javert was at this moment in heaven. Without clearly defining his own feelings, yet, notwithstanding, with a confused intuition of his necessity and his success, he, Javert, personified justice, light, and truth, in their celestial function as destroyers of evil. He was surrounded and supported by infinite depths of authority, reason, precedent, legal conscience, the vengeance of the law, all the stars in the firmament; he protected order, he hurled forth the thunder of the law, he avenged society, he lent aid to the absolute; he stood erect in a halo of glory; there was in his

victory a reminder of defiance and of combat; standing haughty, resplendent, he displayed in full glory the superhuman beastliness of a ferocious archangel; the fearful shadow of the deed he was now accomplishing, made visible by his clinched fist, the uncertain flashes of the social sword; happy and indignant, he had set his heel on crime, vice, rebellion, perdition, and hell, he was radiant, exterminating, smiling; there was an incontestable grandeur in this monstrous St. Michael.

Javert, though hideous, was not ignoble.

Probity, sincerity, candor, conviction, the idea of duty, are things, which, mistaken, may become hideous; but which, even though hideous, remain great; their majesty, peculiar to the human conscience, continues in all their horror; they are virtues with a single vice—error. The pitiless, sincere joy of a fanatic in an act of atrocity, preserves an indescribably mournful radiance which inspires us with veneration. Without suspecting it, Javert, in his fear-inspiring happiness, was pitiable, like every ignorant man who wins a triumph. Nothing could be more painful and terrible than this face, which revealed what we may call all the evil of good.

IV

AUTHORITY RESUMES ITS SWAY

FANTINE had not seen Javert since the day the mayor had wrested her from him. Her sick brain accounted for nothing, only she was sure that he had come for her. She could not endure this hideous face, she felt as if she were dying, she hid her face with both hands, and shrieked in anguish: "M. Madeleine! save me!"

Jean Valjean, we shall call him by no other name henceforth, had risen. He said to Fantine in his gentlest and calmest tone: "Be composed; it is not for you that he comes."

He turned to Javert and said: "I know what you want."

Javert answered: "Hurry along."

There was in the manner in which these two words were uttered an inexpressible something which reminded you of a wild beast and of a madman. Javert did not say "Hurry along!" he said "Hurr-'long." No orthography

can express the tone in which this was pronounced; it ceased to be human speech; it was a howl.

He did not go through the usual ceremony; he made no words; he showed no warrant. To him Jean Valjean was a sort of mysterious and intangible antagonist, a shadowy wrestler with whom he had been struggling for five years, without being able to throw him. This arrest was not a beginning, but an end. He only said: "Hurry along!"

While speaking thus, he did not stir a step, but cast upon Jean Valjean a look like a noose, with which he was accustomed to draw the wretched to him by force.

It was the same look which Fantine had felt penetrate to the very marrow of her bones two months before.

At the exclamation of Javert Fantine had opened her eyes again. But the mayor was there—what could she fear?

Javert advanced to the middle of the chamber exclaiming: "Hey, there; are you coming?"

The unhappy woman looked around her. There was no one but the nun and the mayor. To whom could this contemptuous familiarity be addressed? To herself alone. She shuddered.

Then she saw a mysterious thing, so mysterious that its like had never appeared to her in the darkest delirium of fever.

She saw the spy Javert seize M. l'Mayor by the collar; she saw M. l'Mayor bow his head. The world seemed vanishing before her sight.

Javert, in fact, had taken Jean Valjean by the collar.

"M. l'Mayor?" cried Fantine.

Javert burst into a horrid laugh, displaying all his teeth.

"There is no M. l'Mayor here any longer!" said he.

Jean Valjean did not attempt to disturb the hand which grasped the collar of his coat. He said: "Javert—"

Javert interrupted him: "Call me M. l'Inspector!"

"Monsieur," continued Jean Valjean, "I would like to speak a word with you in private."

"Aloud, speak aloud," said Javert; "people speak aloud to me."

Jean Valjean went on, lowering his voice.

"It is a request that I have to make of you—"

"I tell you to speak aloud."

"But this should not be heard by any one but yourself."

"What is that to me? I will not listen."

Jean Valjean turned to him and said rapidly and in a very low tone: "Give me three days! Three days to go for the child of this unhappy woman! I will pay whatever is necessary. You shall accompany me, if you like."

"Are you laughing at me!" cried Javert. "Hey! I did not think you so stupid! You ask for three days to get away, and tell me you are going for this girl's child? Ha, ha, that's good! That is good!"

Fantine shivered.

"My child!" she exclaimed, "going for my child! Then she is not here! Sister, tell me, where is Cosette? I want my child! M. Madeleine, M. l'Mayor!"

Javert stamped his foot.

"There is the other now. Hold your tongue, hussy! Miserable country, where galley slaves are magistrates and women of the town are nursed like countesses! Ha, but all this will be changed; it was time!"

He gazed steadily at Fantine, and added, grasping anew the cravat, shirt, and coat collar of Jean Valjean: "I tell you that there is no M. Madeleine, and that there is no M. l'Mayor. There is a robber, there is a brigand, there is a convict, called Jean Valjean, and I have got him! That is what there is!"

Fantine started upright, supporting herself by her rigid arms and hands; she looked at Jean Valjean, then at Javert, and then at the nun; she opened her mouth as if to speak; a rattle came from her throat, her teeth struck together, she stretched out her arms in anguish, convulsively opening her hands, and groping about her like one who is drowning; then sank suddenly back upon the pillow.

Her head struck the head of the bed and fell forward on her breast, the mouth gaping, the eyes open and glazed.

She was dead.

Jean Valjean put his hand on that of Javert which held him, and opened it as he would have opened the hand of a child; then he said: "You have killed this woman."

"Have done with this!" cried Javert, furious, "I am not here to listen to sermons; save all that; the guard is below; come right along, or the handcuffs!"

There stood in a corner of the room an old iron bedstead

in a dilapidated condition, which the sisters used as a camp-bed when they watched. Jean Valjean went to the bed, wrenched out the rickety head bar—a thing easy for muscles like his—in the twinkling of an eye, and with the bar in his clinched fist, looked at Javert. Javert recoiled toward the door.

Jean Valjean, his iron bar in hand, walked slowly toward the bed of Fantine. On reaching it, he turned and said to Javert in a voice that could scarcely be heard: "I advise you not to disturb me now."

Nothing is more certain than that Javert trembled.

He had an idea of calling the guard, but Jean Valjean might profit by his absence to escape. He remained, therefore; grasped the bottom of his cane, and leaned against the framework of the door without taking his eyes from Jean Valjean.

Jean Valjean rested his elbow upon the post and his head upon his hand, and gazed at Fantine, stretched motionless before him. He remained thus, mute and absorbed, evidently lost to everything of this life. His countenance and attitude bespoke nothing but inexpressible pity.

After a few moments' reverie he bent down to Fantine, and addressed her in a whisper.

What did he say? What could this condemned man say to this dead woman? What were these words? They were heard by none on earth. Did the dead woman hear them? There are touching illusions which, perhaps, are sublime realities. One thing is beyond doubt; Sister Simplice, the only witness of what passed, has often related that, at the moment when Jean Valjean whispered in the ear of Fantine she distinctly saw an ineffable smile beam on those pale lips and in those dim eyes, full of the wonder of the tomb.

Jean Valjean took Fantine's head in his hands and arranged it on the pillow, as a mother would have done for her child, then fastened the string of her night-dress, and replaced her hair beneath her cap. This done, he closed her eyes.

The face of Fantine, at this instant, seemed strangely illumined.

Death is the entrance into the great light.

Fantine's hand hung over the side of the bed. Jean Valjean knelt before this hand, raised it gently, and kissed it.

Then he rose, and, turning to Javert, said: "Now I am at your disposal."

V

A FITTING TOMB

JAVERT put Jean Valjean in the city prison.

The arrest of M. Madeleine produced a sensation, or rather an extraordinary commotion at M—— sur M——. We are sorry not to be able to disguise the fact that, on this single sentence, "*He was a galley slave*," almost everybody abandoned him. In less than two hours all the good he had done was forgotten, and he was "nothing but a galley slave." It is just to say that the details of the scene at Arras were not yet known. All day long conversations like this were heard in every part of the town: "Don't you know he was a discharged convict?" "He!" "Who?" "The mayor." "Bah! M. Madeleine?" "Yes." "Indeed!" "His name was not Madeleine; he has a horrid name, Béjean, Bojean, Bonjean!" "Oh! bless me." "He has been arrested." "Arrested!" "In prison, in the city prison, to await his removal." "His removal! where will he be taken?" "To the court of assizes, for a highway robbery he once committed." "Well! I always had suspected him. The man was too good, too perfect, too sweet. He refused fees, and gave sous to every little blackguard he met. I always thought that there must be something bad at the bottom of all this."

The "drawing-rooms," above all, were entirely of this opinion.

An old lady, a subscriber to the "Drapeau Blanc," made this remark, the depth of which it is almost impossible to fathom: "I am not sorry for it. That will teach the Bonapartists."

In this manner the phantom which had been called M. Madeleine was dissipated at M—— sur M——. Three or four persons alone in the whole city remained faithful to his memory. The old portress who had been his servant was among the number.

On the evening of this same day the worthy old woman was sitting in her lodge, still quite bewildered and sunk in sad reflections. The factory had been closed all day, the carriage doors were bolted, the street was deserted. There was no one in the house but the two nuns, Sister Perpétue and Sister Simplice, who were watching the corpse of Fantine.

Toward the time when M. Madeleine had been accustomed to return the honest portress rose mechanically, took the key of his room from a drawer, with the taper-stand that he used at night to light himself up the stairs, then hung the key on a nail from which he had been in the habit of taking it, and placed the taper-stand by its side, as if she were expecting him. She then seated herself again in her chair and resumed her reflections. The poor old woman had done all this without being conscious of it.

More than two hours had elapsed when she started from her reverie and exclaimed: "Why, bless me! I have hung his key on the nail!"

Just then the window of her box opened, a hand passed through the opening, took the key and stand, and lighted the taper at the candle which was burning.

The portress raised her eyes; she was transfixed with astonishment; a cry rose to her lips, but she could not give it utterance.

She knew the hand, the arm, the coat-sleeve.

It was M. Madeleine.

She was speechless for some seconds; thunderstruck, as she said to herself afterward, in giving her account of the affair.

"My God! M. l'Mayor!" she exclaimed, "I thought you were—"

She stopped; the end of her sentence would not have been respectful to the beginning. To her, Jean Valjean was still M. l'Mayor.

He completed her thought.

"In prison," said he. "I was there; I broke a bar from a window, let myself fall from the top of a roof, and here I am. I am going to my room; go for Sister Simplice. She is doubtless beside this poor woman."

The old servant hastily obeyed.

He gave her no caution, very sure she would guard him better than he would guard himself.

It has never been known how he had succeeded in gaining entrance into the courtyard without opening the carriage-door. He had, and always carried about him, a pass-key which opened a little side door, but he must have been searched, and this taken from him. This point is not yet cleared up.

He ascended the staircase which led to his room. On reaching the top, he left his taper-stand on the upper stair, opened his door with little noise, felt his way to the window and closed the shutter, then came back, took his taper, and went into the chamber.

The precaution was not useless; it will be remembered that his window could be seen from the street.

He cast a glance about him over his table, his chair, his bed, which had not been slept in for three days. There remained no trace of the disorder of the night before the last. The portress had "put the room to rights." Only she had picked up from the ashes, and laid in order on the table, the ends of the loaded club, and the 40-sou piece, blackened by the fire.

He took a sheet of paper and wrote: "These are the ends of my loaded club and the 40-sou piece stolen from Petit Gervais, of which I spoke at the court of assizes," then placed the two bits of iron and the piece of silver on the sheet in such a way that it would be the first thing perceived on entering the room. He took from a wardrobe an old shirt which he tore into several pieces and in which he packed the two silver candlesticks. In all this there was neither haste nor agitation. And even while packing the bishop's candlesticks he was eating a piece of black bread. It was probably prison bread, which he had brought away in escaping.

This has been established by crumbs of bread found on the floor of the room, when the court afterward ordered a search.

Two gentle taps were heard at the door.

"Come in," said he.

It was Sister Simplice.

She was pale, her eyes were red, and the candle which she held trembled in her hand. The shocks of destiny

have this peculiarity: however subdued or disciplined our feelings may be, they draw out the human nature from the depths of our souls and compel us to exhibit it to others. In the agitations of this day the nun had again become a woman. She had wept and she was trembling.

Jean Valjean had written a few lines on a piece of paper which he handed to the nun, saying: "Sister, you will give this to the curé."

The paper was not folded. She cast her eyes on it.

"You may read it," said he.

She read: "I beg M. l'Curé to take charge of all that I leave here. He will please defray therefrom the expenses of my trial and of the burial of the woman who died this morning. The remainder is for the poor."

The sister attempted to speak, but could scarcely stammer out a few inarticulate sounds. She succeeded, however, in saying: "Does not M. l'Mayor wish to see this poor unfortunate again for the last time?"

"No," said he, "I am pursued; I should be arrested in her chamber; it would disturb her."

He had scarcely finished when there was a loud noise on the staircase. They heard a tumult of steps ascending and the old portress exclaiming, in her loudest and most piercing tones: "My good sir, I swear to you, in the name of God, that nobody has come in here the whole day and the whole of the evening; that I have not even once left my door!"

A man replied: "But yet there is a light in this room."

They recognized the voice of Javert.

The chamber was so arranged that the door, in opening, covered the corner of the wall to the right. Jean Valjean blew out the taper and placed himself in this corner.

Sister Simplice fell on her knees near the table.

The door opened.

Javert entered.

The whispering of several men and the protestations of the portress were heard in the hall.

The nun did not raise her eyes. She was praying.

The candle was on the mantel and gave but a dim light.

Javert perceived the sister and stopped, abashed.

It will be remembered that the very foundation of Javert, his element, the medium in which he breathed, was

veneration for all authority. He was perfectly homogeneous, and admitted of no objection or abridgment. To him, be it understood, ecclesiastical authority was the highest of all; he was devout, superficial, and correct upon this point as upon all others. In his eyes a priest was a spirit who was never mistaken, a nun was a being who never sinned. They were souls walled in from this world, with a single door which never opened but for the exit of truth.

On perceiving the sister his first impulse was to retire.

But there was also another duty which held him and which urged him imperiously in the opposite direction. His second impulse was to remain and to venture at least one question.

This was the Sister Simplice, who had never lied in her life. Javert knew this, and venerated her especially on account of it.

"Sister," said he, "are you alone in this room?"

There was a fearful instant, during which the poor portress felt her limbs falter beneath her. The sister raised her eyes, and replied: "Yes."

"Then," continued Javert, "excuse me if I persist—it is my duty—you have not seen this evening a person, a man—he has escaped and we are in search of him—Jean Valjean; you have not seen him?"

The sister answered: "No."

She lied. Two lies in succession, one upon another, without hesitation, quickly, as if she were an adept in it.

"Your pardon!" said Javert, and he withdrew, bowing reverently.

Oh, holy maiden! for many years thou hast been no more in this world; thou hast joined thy sisters, the virgins, and thy brethren, the angels, in glory; may this falsehood be remembered to thee in paradise.

The affirmation of the sister was to Javert something so decisive that he did not even notice the singularity of this taper, just blown out and smoking on the table.

An hour afterward a man was walking rapidly in the darkness beneath the trees from M—— sur M—— in the direction of Paris. This man was Jean Valjean. It has been established by the testimony of two or three wagoners who met him that he carried a bundle and was dressed in a blouse. Where did he get this blouse? It was never

known. Nevertheless, an old artisan had died in the infirmary of the factory a few days before, leaving nothing but his blouse. This might have been the one.

A last word in regard to Fantine.

We have all one mother—the earth. Fantine was restored to this mother.

The curé thought best, and did well, perhaps, to reserve out of what Jean Valjean had left, the largest amount possible for the poor. After all, who were in question? A convict and a woman of the town. This was why he simplified the burial of Fantine, and reduced it to that bare necessity called the Potter's Field.

And so Fantine was buried in the common grave of the cemetery, which is for everybody and for all, and in which the poor are lost.

Happily, God knows where to find the soul.

Fantine was laid away in the darkness with bodies which had no name; she suffered the promiscuity of dust. She was thrown into the public pit. Her tomb was like her bed.

END OF FANTINE

COSETTE

BOOK FIRST—WATERLOO

I

WHAT YOU MEET IN COMING FROM NIVELLES

ON a beautiful morning in May, last year (1861), a traveler, he who tells this story, was journeying from Nivelles toward La Hulpe. He traveled on foot. He was following, between two rows of trees, a broad road, undulating over hills, which, one after another, upheave it and let it fall again, like enormous waves. He had passed Lillois and Bois-Seigneur-Isaac. He saw to the west the slated steeple of Braine-l'Alleud, which has the form of an inverted vase. He had just passed a wood upon a hill, and at the corner of a cross-road, beside a sort of worm-eaten sign-post, bearing the inscription: "Old Toll Gate," No. 4—a tavern with this sign: "The Four Winds. Echaleau, Private Café."

Half a mile from this tavern he reached the bottom of a little valley, where a stream flowed beneath an arch in the embankment of the road. The cluster of trees, thin sown, but very green, which fills the vale on one side of the road, on the other spreads out into the meadows and sweeps away in graceful disorder toward Braine-l'Alleud.

At this point there was at the right, and immediately on the road, an inn, with a four-wheeled cart before the door, a great bundle of hoop-poles, a plow, a pile of dry brush near a quick-set hedge, some lime which was smoking in a square hole in the ground, and a ladder lying along an old shed with mangers for straw. A young girl was pulling weeds in a field, where a large green poster, probably of a traveling show at some annual fair, fluttered in the wind. At the corner of the inn, beside a pond, in which a flotilla of ducks was navigating, a difficult footpath lost itself in the shrubbery. The traveler took this path.

At the end of 100 paces, passing a wall of the fifteenth century, surmounted by a sharp gable of crossed bricks, he found himself opposite a great arched stone doorway, with rectilinear impost, in the solemn style of Louis XIV, and plain medallions on the sides. Over the entrance was a severe façade, and a wall perpendicular to the façade almost touched the doorway, flanking it at an abrupt right angle. On the meadow before the door lay three harrows, through which were blooming, as best they could, all the flowers of May. The doorway was closed. It was shut by two decrepit folding-doors, decorated with an old rusty knocker.

The sunshine was enchanting; the branches of the trees had that gentle tremulousness of the month of May, which seems to come from the birds' nests rather than the wind. A spruce little bird, probably in love, was singing desperately in a tall tree.

The traveler paused and examined in the stone at the left of the door, near the ground, a large circular excavation like the hollow of a sphere. Just then the folding-doors opened and a peasant woman came out.

She saw the traveler and perceived what he was examining.

"It was a French ball which did that," said she.

And she added: "What you see there higher up in the door near a nail is the hole made by a Biscay musket. The bullet has not gone through the wood."

"What is the name of this place?" asked the traveler.

"Hougomont," the woman answered.

The traveler raised his head. He took a few steps and looked over the hedges. He saw in the horizon, through the trees, a sort of hillock, and on this hillock something which, in the distance, resembled a lion.

He was on the battlefield of Waterloo.

II

HOUGOMONT

HOUGOMONT—this was the fatal spot, the beginning of the resistance, the first check encountered at Waterloo by the great butcher of Europe, called Napoleon; the first knot under the axe.

It was a château; it is now nothing more than a farm. Hougomont, to the antiquary, is Hugomons. This manor was built by Hugo, Sire de Somerel, the same who endowed the sixth chaplainship of the Abbey of Villers.

The traveler pushed open the door, elbowed an old carriage under the porch, and entered the court.

The first thing that he noticed in this yard was a door of the sixteenth century, which seemed like an arch, everything having fallen down around it. The monumental aspect is often produced by ruin. Near the arch opens another door in the wall, with keystones of the time of Henry IV, which discloses the trees of an orchard. Beside this door was a dunghill, mattocks, and shovels, some carts, an old well with its flagstone and iron pulley, a skipping colt, a strutting turkey, a chapel surmounted by a steeple, a pear-tree in bloom, trained in espalier on the wall of the chapel; this was the court, the conquest of which was the aspiration of Napoleon. This bit of earth, could he have taken it, would perhaps have given him the world. The hens are scattering the dust with their beaks. You hear a growling; it is a great dog, who shows his teeth and takes the place of the English.

The English fought admirably there. The four companies of guards, under Cooke, held their ground for seven hours against the fury of an assaulting army.

Hougomont, seen on the map, on a geometrical plan, comprising buildings and inclosure, presents a sort of irregular rectangle, one corner of which is cut off. At this corner is the southern entrance, guarded by this wall, which commands it at the shortest musket range. Hougomont has two entrances: the southern, that of the château, and the northern, that of the farm. Napoleon sent against Hougomont his brother Jerome. The divisions of Guilleminot, Foy, and Bachelu were hurled against it; nearly the whole corps of Reille was there employed and there defeated, and the bullets of Kellermann were exhausted against this heroic wall-front. It was too much for the brigade of Bauduin to force Hougomont on the north, and the brigade of Soye could only batter it on the south—it could not take it.

The buildings of the farm are on the southern side of the court. A small portion of the northern door, broken

by the French, hangs dangling from the wall. It is composed of four planks nailed to two cross-pieces, and in it may be seen the scars of the attack.

The northern door, forced by the French, and to which a piece has been added to replace the panel suspended from the wall, stands half open at the foot of the court-yard; it is cut squarely in a wall of stone below and brick above, and closes the court on the north. It is a simple cart-door, such as are found on all small farms, composed of two large folding-doors, made of rustic planks; beyond this are the meadows. This entrance was furiously contested. For a long time there could be seen upon the door all sorts of prints of bloody hands. It was there that Bauduin was killed.

The storm of the combat is still in this court; the horror is visible there; the overturn of the conflict is there petrified; it lives, it dies; it was but yesterday. The walls are still in death agonies; the stones fall; the breaches cry out; the holes are wounds; the trees bend and shudder as if making an effort to escape.

This court, in 1815, was in better condition than it is to-day. Structures which have since been pulled down formed redans, angles, and squares.

The English were barricaded there; the French effected an entrance, but could not maintain their position. At the side of the chapel, one wing of the château, the only remnant which exists of the manor of Hougomont, stands crumbling, one might almost say disemboweled. The château served as donjon; the chapel served as block-house. There was work of extermination. The French, shot down from all sides, from behind the walls, from the roofs of the barns, from the bottom of the cellars, through every window, through every air-hole, through every chink in the stones, brought fagots and fired the walls and the men; the storm of balls was answered by a tempest of flame.

A glimpse may be had in the ruined wing, through the iron-barred windows of the dismantled chambers of a main building; the English Guards lay in ambush in these chambers; the spiral staircase, broken from foundation to roof, appears like the interior of a broken shell. The staircase has two landings; the English, besieged in the staircase, and crowded upon the upper steps, had cut away the lower

ones. These are large slabs of blue stone, now heaped together among the nettles. A dozen steps still cling to the wall; on the first it is cut to the image of a trident. These inaccessible steps are firm in their sockets, all the rest resemble a toothless jawbone. Two old trees are there; one is dead, the other is wounded at the root, and does not leaf out until April. Since 1850 it has begun to grow across the staircase.

There was a massacre in the chapel. The interior, again restored to quiet, is strange. No mass has been said there since the carnage. The altar remains, however—a clumsy wooden altar, backed by a wall of rough stone. Four whitewashed walls, a door opposite the altar, two little arched windows over the door, a large wooden crucifix, above the crucifix a square opening in which is stuffed a bundle of straw; in a corner on the ground, an old glazed sash all broken, such is this chapel. Near the altar hangs a wooden statue of St. Anne, of the fifteenth century; the head of the infant Jesus has been carried away by a musket-shot. The French, masters for a moment of the chapel, then dislodged, fired it. The flames filled this ruin; it was a furnace; the door was burned, the floor was burned, but the wooden Christ was not burned. The fire eat its way to his feet, the blackened stumps of which are only visible; then it stopped. A miracle, say the country people. The infant Jesus, decapitated, was not so fortunate as the Christ.

The walls are covered with inscriptions. Near the feet of the Christ we read this name: *"Henquinez."* Then these others: *"Conde de Rio Maior Marques y Marquesa de Almagro (Habana)."* There are French names, with exclamation points, signs of anger. The wall was whitewashed in 1849. The nations were insulting each other on it.

At the door of this chapel a body was picked up holding an axe in its hand. This body was that of Second Lieutenant Legros.

On coming out of the chapel, a well is seen at the left. There are two in this yard. You ask: why is there no bucket and no pulley to this one? Because no water is drawn from it now. Why is no more water drawn from it? Because it is full of skeletons.

The last man who drew water from that well was Guillaume Van Kylsom. He was a peasant, who lived in Hougomont, and was gardener there. On the 18th of June, 1815, his family fled and hid in the woods.

The forest about the Abbey of Villiers concealed for several days and several nights all that scattered and distressed population. Even now certain vestiges may be distinguished, such as old trunks of scorched trees, which mark the place of these poor trembling bivouacs in the depths of the thickets.

Guillaume Van Kylsom remained at Hougomont "to take care of the château," and hid in the cellar. The English discovered him there. He was torn from his hiding-place, and, with blows of the flat of their swords, the soldiers compelled this frightened man to wait upon them. They were thirsty; this Guillaume brought them drink. It was from this well that he drew the water. Many drank their last quaff. This well, where drank so many of the dead, must die itself also.

After the action there was haste to bury the corpses. Death has its own way of imbittering victory, and it causes glory to be followed by pestilence. Typhus is the successor of triumph. This well was deep, it was made a sepulchre. Three hundred dead were thrown into it. Perhaps with too much haste. Were they all dead? Tradition says no. It appears that on the night after the burial feeble voices were heard calling out from the well.

This well is isolated in the middle of the courtyard. Three walls, half brick and half stone, folded back like the leaves of a screen and imitating a square turret, surround it on three sides. The fourth side is open. On that side the water was drawn. The back wall has a sort of shapeless bull's-eye, perhaps a hole made by a shell. This turret had a roof, of which only the beams remain. The iron that sustains the wall on the right is in the shape of a cross. You bend over the well, the eye is lost in a deep brick cylinder, which is filled with an accumulation of shadows. All around it the bottom of the walls is covered by nettles.

This well has not in front the large blue flagging stone, which serves as curb for all the wells of Belgium. The blue stone is replaced by a cross-bar on which rests five or

six misshapen wooden stumps, knotty and hardened, that resemble huge bones. There is no longer either bucket or chain or pulley; but the stone basin is still there which served for the waste water. The rain water gathers there, and from time to time a bird from the neighboring forest comes to drink and flies away.

One house among these ruins, the farmhouse, is still inhabited. The door of this house opens upon the courtyard. By the side of a pretty gothic keyhole plate there is upon the door a handful of iron trefoil, slanting forward. At the moment that the Hanoverian lieutenant, Wilda, was seizing this to take refuge in the farmhouse, a French sapper struck off his hand with the blow of an axe.

The family which occupies the house calls the former gardener, Van Kylsom, long since dead, its grandfather. A gray-haired woman said to us: "I was there. I was three years old. My sister, larger, was afraid and cried. They carried us away into the woods; I was in my mother's arms. They laid their ears to the ground to listen. For my part, I mimicked the cannon and I went *boom, boom.*"

One of the yard doors, on the left, we have said, opens into the orchard.

The orchard is terrible.

It is in three parts, one might almost say in three acts. The first part is a garden, the second is the orchard, the third is a wood. These three parts have a common inclosure: on the side of the entrance the buildings of the château and the farm, on the left a hedge, on the right a wall, at the back a wall. The wall on the right is of brick. the wall on the back is of stone. The garden is entered first. It is sloping, planted with currant bushes, covered with wild vegetation and terminated by a terrace of cut stone, with balusters with a double swell. It is a seigniorial garden, in this first French style, which preceded the modern; now ruins and briers. The pilasters are surmounted by globes which look like stone cannon balls. We count forty-three balusters still in their places; the others are lying in the grass; nearly all show some scratches of musketry. A broken baluster remains upright like a broken leg.

It is in this garden, which is lower than the orchard, that six of the first light voltigeurs, having penetrated thither, and being unable to escape, caught and trapped like bears in a pit, engaged in a battle with two Hanoverian companies, one of which was armed with carbines. The Hanoverians were ranged along these balusters and fired from above. These voltigeurs, answering from below, six against 200, intrepid, with the currant bushes only for a shelter, took a quarter of an hour to die.

You rise a few steps and from the garden pass into the orchard proper. There, in these few square yards, 1,500 men fell in less than an hour. The wall seems ready to recommence the combat. The thirty-eight loopholes, pierced by the English at irregular heights, are there yet. In front of the sixteenth lie two English tombs of granite. There are no loopholes except in the south wall; the principal attack comes from that side. This wall is concealed on the outside by a large quickset hedge; the French came up, thinking there was nothing in their way but the hedge, crossed it and found the wall, an obstacle and an ambush, the English guards behind, the thirty-eight loopholes pouring forth their fire at once, a storm of grape and of balls; and Soye's brigade broke there. Waterloo commenced thus.

The orchard, however, was taken. They had no scaling ladders, but the French climbed the wall with their hands. They fought hand to hand under the trees. All this grass was soaked with blood. A battalion from Nassau, 700 men, was annihilated there. On the outside, the wall, against which the two batteries of Kellermann were directed, is gnawed with grape.

This orchard is as responsive as any other to the month of May. It has its golden blossoms and its daisies; the grass is high; farm-horses are grazing; lines on which clothes are drying cross the intervals between the trees, making travelers bend their heads; you walk over that sward and your foot sinks in the path of the mole. In the midst of the grass you notice an uprooted trunk, lying on the ground, but still growing green. Major Blackmann leaned back against it to die. Under a large tree near by fell the German general, Duplat, of a French family which fled on the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Close beside

it leans a diseased old apple-tree swathed in a bandage of straw and loam. Nearly all the apple-trees are falling from old age. There is not one which does not show its cannon ball or its musket shot. Skeletons of dead trees abound in this orchard. Crows fly in the branches; beyond it is a wood full of violets.

Bauduin killed, Foy wounded, fire, slaughter, carnage, a brook made of English blood, of German blood, and of French blood, mingled in fury; a well filled with corpses, the regiment of Nassau and the regiment of Brunswick destroyed, Duplat killed, Blackmann killed, the English guards crippled, twenty French battalions, out of the forty of Reille's corps, decimated, 3,000 men, in this one ruin of Hougomont, sabred, slashed, slaughtered, shot, burned; and all this in order that to-day a peasant may say to a traveler: "Monsieur, give me three francs; if you like, I will explain to you the affair of Waterloo."

III

THE 18TH OF JUNE, 1815

LET us go back, for such is the story-teller's privilege, and place ourselves in the year 1815, a little before the date of the commencement of the action narrated in the first part of this book.

Had it not rained on the night of the 17th of June, 1815, the future of Europe would have been changed. A few drops of water, more or less, prostrated Napoleon. That Waterloo should be the end of Austerlitz, Providence needed only a little rain, and an unseasonable cloud crossing the sky sufficed for the overthrow of a world.

The battle of Waterloo—and this gave Blucher time to come up—could not be commenced before 11:30 o'clock. Why? Because the ground was soft. It was necessary to wait for it to acquire some little firmness so that the artillery could manœuvre.

Napoleon was an artillery officer and he never forgot it. The foundation of this prodigious captain was the man who, in his report to the Directory upon Aboukir, said: "Such of our balls killed six men." All his plans of battle were made for projectiles. To converge the artillery upon

a given point was his key of victory. He treated the strategy of the hostile general as a citadel and battered it to a breach. He overwhelmed the weak point with grape; he joined and resolved battles with cannon. There was marksmanship in his genius. To destroy squares, to pulverize regiments, to break lines, to crush and disperse masses, all this was for him; to strike, strike, strike incessantly, and he intrusted this duty to the cannon ball. A formidable method, which, joined to genius, made this sombre athlete of the pugilism of war invincible for fifteen years.

On the 18th of June, 1815, he counted on his artillery the more because he had the advantage in numbers. Wellington had only 159 guns; Napoleon had 240.

Had the ground been dry and the artillery able to move, the action would have been commenced at six o'clock in the morning. The battle would have been won and finished at two o'clock, three hours before the Prussians turned the scale of fortune.

How much fault is there on the part of Napoleon in the loss of this battle? Is the shipwreck to be imputed to the pilot?

Was the evident physical decline of Napoleon accompanied at this time by a corresponding mental decline? Had his twenty years of war worn out the sword as well as the sheath, the soul as well as the body? Was the veteran injuriously felt in the captain? In a word, was that genius, as many considerable historians have thought, under an eclipse? Had he put on a frenzy to disguise his enfeeblement from himself? Did he begin to waver and be bewildered by a random blast? Was he becoming, a grave fault in a general, careless of danger? In that class of material great men who may be called the giants of action, is there an age when their genius becomes short-sighted? Old age has no hold on the geniuses of the ideal; for the Dantes and the Michelangelos, to grow old is to grow great; for the Hannibals and the Bonapartes, is it to grow less? Had Napoleon lost his clear sense of victory? Could he no longer recognize the shoal, no longer divine the snare, no longer discern the crumbling edge of the abyss? Had he lost the instinct of disaster? Was he, who formerly knew all the paths of triumph, and who, from the height

of his flashing car, pointed them out with sovereign finger, now under such dark hallucination as to drive his tumultuous train of legions over the precipices? Was he seized at forty-six years with a supreme madness? Was this titanic driver of destiny now only a monstrous break-neck?

We think not.

His plan of battle was, all confess, a masterpiece. To march straight to the centre of the allied line, pierce the enemy, cut them in two, push the British half upon Hal and the Prussian half upon Tongress, make of Wellington and Blücher two fragments, carry Mont St. Jean, seize Brussels, throw the German into the Rhine and the Englishman into the sea. All this, for Napoleon, was in this battle. What would follow anybody can see.

We do not, of course, profess to give here the history of Waterloo; one of the scenes that gave rise to the drama which we are describing hangs upon that battle; but the history of the battle is not our subject; that history, moreover, is told, and told in a masterly way, from one point of view by Napoleon, from the other point of view by Charras. As for us we leave the two historians to their contest; we are only a witness at a distance, a passer in the plain, a seeker bending over this ground kneaded with human flesh, taking, perhaps, appearances for realities. We have no right to cope in the name of science with a mass of facts in which there is, doubtless, some mirage; we have neither the military experience nor the strategic ability which authorizes a system; in our opinion, a chain of accidents overruled both captains at Waterloo; and, when destiny is called in, this mysterious accused, we judge like the people, that artless judge.

IV

A

THOSE who would get a clear idea of the battle of Waterloo have only to lay down upon the ground in their mind a capital A. The left stroke of the A is the road from Nivelles, the right stroke is the road from Genappe, the cross of the A is the sunken road from Ohain to Braine-l'Alleud. The top of the A is Mont St. Jean, Wellington

is there; the left-hand lower point is Hougomont, Reille is there with Jerome Bonaparte; the right-hand lower point is La Belle Alliance, Napoleon is there. A little below the point where the cross of the A meets, and cuts the right stroke, is La Haie Sainte. At the middle of this cross is the precise point where the final battle word was spoken. There the lion is placed, the involuntary symbol of the supreme heroism of the imperial guard.

The triangle contained at the top of the A, between the two strokes and the cross, is the plateau of Mont St. Jean. The struggle for this plateau was the whole of the battle.

The wings of the two armies extended to the right and left of the two roads from Genappe and from Nivelles; D'Erlon being opposite Picton, Reille opposite Hill.

Behind the point of the A, behind the plateau of Mont St. Jean, is the forest of the Soignes.

As to the plain itself, we must imagine a vast, undulating country; each wave commanding the next, and these undulations, rising toward Mont St. Jean, are there bounded by the forest.

Two hostile armies upon a field of battle are two wrestlers. Their arms are locked; each seeks to throw the other. They grasp at every aid; a thicket is a point of support; a corner of a wall is a brace for the shoulder; for lack of a few sheds to lean upon a regiment loses its footing; a depression in the plain, a movement of the soil, a convenient cross path, a wood, a ravine, may catch the heel of this colossus which is called an army and prevent him from falling. He who leaves the field is beaten. Hence, for the responsible chief, the necessity of examining the smallest tuft of trees and appreciating the slightest details of contour.

Both generals had carefully studied the plain of Mont St. Jean, now called the plain of Waterloo. Already in the preceding year Wellington, with the sagacity of prescience, had examined it as a possible site for a great battle. On this ground and for this contest Wellington had the favorable side, Napoleon the unfavorable. The English army was above, the French army below.

To sketch here the appearance of Napoleon, on horseback, glass in hand, upon the heights of Rossomme, at

dawn on the 18th of June, 1815, would be almost superfluous. Before we point him out everybody has seen him. This calm profile, under the little chapeau of the school of Brienne, this green uniform, the white facings concealing the stars on his breast, the overcoat concealing the epaulets, the bit of red sash under the waistcoat, the leather breeches, the white horse with his housings of purple velvet with crowned N's and eagles on the corners, the Hessian boots over silk stockings, the silver spurs, the Marengo sword, this whole form of the last Cæsar lives in all imaginations, applauded by half the world, reprobated by the rest.

That form has long been fully illuminated; it did have a certain traditional obscurity through which most heroes pass, and which always veils the truth for a longer or shorter time; but now the history is luminous and complete.

This light of history is pitiless; it has this strange and divine quality that, all luminous as it is, and precisely because it is luminous, it often casts a shadow just where we saw a radiance; of the same man it makes two different phantoms, and the one attacks and punishes the other, and the darkness of the despot struggles with the splendor of the captain. Hence results a truer measure in the final judgment of the nations. Babylon violated lessens Alexander; Rome enslaved lessens Cæsar; massacred Jerusalem lessens Titus. Tyranny follows the tyrant. It is woe to a man to leave behind him a shadow which has his form.

V

THE QUID OBSCURUM OF BATTLES

EVERYBODY knows the first phase of this battle; the difficult opening, uncertain, hesitating, threatening for both armies, but for the English still more than for the French.

It had rained all night; the ground was softened by the shower; water lay here and there in the hollows of the plain as in basins; at some points the wheels sank in to the axles; the horses' girths dripped with liquid mud; had not the wheat and rye spread down by that multitude of

advancing carts filled the ruts and made a bed under the wheels all movement, particularly in the valleys on the side of Papelotte, would have been impossible.

The affair opened late; Napoleon, as we have explained, had a habit of holding all his artillery in hand like a pistol, aiming now at one point, anon at another point of the battle, and he desired to wait until the field-batteries could wheel and gallop freely; for this the sun must come out and dry the ground. But the sun did not come out. He had not now the field of Austerlitz. When the first gun was fired the English General Colville looked at his watch and noted that is was 11:35 o'clock.

The battle was commenced with fury, more fury, perhaps, than the Emperor would have wished, by the left wing of the French at Hougomont. At the same time Napoleon attacked the centre by hurling the brigade of Quiot upon La Haie Sainte, and Ney pushed the right wing of the French against the left wing of the English which rested upon Papelotte.

The attack upon Hougomont was partly a feint; to draw Wellington that way, to make him incline to the left; this was the plan. This plan would have succeeded, had not the four companies of the English Guards and the brave Belgians of Perponcher's division resolutely held the position, enabling Wellington, instead of massing his forces upon that point, to limit himself to reinforcing them only by four additional companies of guards and a Brunswick battalion.

The attack of the French right wing upon Papelotte was intended to overwhelm the English left, cut the Brussels road, bar the passage of the Prussians, should they come, to carry Mont St. Jean, drive back Wellington upon Hougomont, from thence upon Braine l'Alleud; from thence upon Hal; nothing is clearer. With the exception of a few incidents, this attack succeeded. Papelotte was taken; La Haie Sainte was carried.

Note a circumstance. There were in the English infantry, particularly in Kempt's brigade, many new recruits. These young soldiers, before our formidable infantry, were heroic; their inexperience bore itself boldly in the affair; they did especially good service as skirmishers: the soldier as a skirmisher, to some extent left to him-

self, becomes, so to speak, his own general; these recruits exhibited something of French invention and French fury. This raw infantry showed enthusiasm. That displeased Wellington.

After the capture of La Haie Sainte, the battle wavered.

There is in this day from noon to four o'clock an obscure interval; the middle of this battle is almost indistinct, and partakes of the thickness of the conflict. Twilight was gathering. You could perceive vast fluctuations in this mist, a giddy mirage, implements of war now almost unknown, the flaming colbacks, the waving sabre-taches, the crossed shoulder-belts, the grenade cartridge-boxes, the dolmans of the hussars, the red boots with a thousand creases, the heavy shakos festooned with fringe, the almost black infantry of Brunswick united with the scarlet infantry of England, the English soldiers with great white circular pads on their sleeves for epaulets, the Hanoverian light horse, with their oblong leather cap with copper bands and flowing plumes of red horsehair, the Scotch with bare knees and plaids, the large white gaiters of our grenadiers; tableau, not strategic lines, the need of Salvator Rosa, not of Gribeauval.

A certain amount of tempest always mingles with a battle. *Quid obscurum, quid divinum.* Each historian traces the particular lineament which pleases him in this hurly-burly. Whatever may be the combinations of the generals, the shock of armed masses has incalculable recoils in action, the two plans of the two leaders enter into each other and are disarranged by each other. Such a point of the battlefield swallows up more combatants than such another, as the more or less spongy soil drinks up water thrown upon it faster or slower. You are obliged to pour out more soldiers there than you thought. An unforeseen expenditure. The line of battle waves and twists like a thread; streams of blood flow regardless of logic; the fronts of the armies undulate; regiments entering or retiring make capes and gulfs; all these shoals are continually swaying back and forth before each other; where infantry was, artillery comes; where artillery was, cavalry rushes up, battalions are smoke. There was something there; look for it; it is gone; the vistas are displaced; the sombre folds ad-

vance and recoil; a kind of sepulchral wind pushes forward, crowds back, swells, and disperses these tragic multitudes. What is a hand-to-hand fight? An oscillation. A rigid mathematical plan tells the story of a minute, and not a day. To paint a battle needs those mighty painters who have chaos in their touch. Rembrandt is better than Vandermeulen. Vandermeulen, exact at noon, lies at three o'clock. Geometry deceives; the hurricane alone is true. This is what gives Folard the right to contradict Polybius. We must add that there is always a certain moment when the battle degenerates into a combat, particularizes itself, scatters into innumerable details, which, to borrow the expression of Napoleon himself, "belong rather to the biography of the regiments than to the history of the army." The historian, in this case, evidently has the right of abridgment. He can only seize upon the principal outlines of the struggle, and it is given to no narrator, however conscientious he may be, to fix absolutely the form of this horrible cloud which is called a battle.

This, which is true of all great armed encounters, is particularly applicable to Waterloo.

However, in the afternoon, at a certain moment, the battle assumed precision.

VI

FOUR O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON

TOWARD four o'clock the situation of the English army was serious. The Prince of Orange commanded the centre, Hill the right wing, Picton the left wing. The Prince of Orange, desperate and intrepid, cried to the Hollando-Belgians: "Nassau! Brunswick! never retreat!" Hill, exhausted, had fallen back upon Wellington. Picton was dead. At the very moment that the English had taken from the French the colors of the 105th of the line, the French had killed General Picton by a ball through the head. For Wellington the battle had two points of support—Hougomont and La Haie Sainte; Hougomont still held out, but was burning; La Haie Sainte had been taken. Of the German battalion which defended it, forty-two men only survived; all the officers except five were dead or prisoners. Three thousand combatants were massacred

in that grange. A sergeant of the English Guards, the best boxer in England, reputed invulnerable by his comrades, had been killed by a little French drummer. Baring had been dislodged, Alten put to the sword. Several colors had been lost—one belonging to Alten's division and one to the Luneberg battalion, borne by a prince of the family of Deux-Ponts. The Scotch Grays were no more; Ponsonby's heavy dragoons had been cut to pieces. That valiant cavalry had given way before the lancers of Bro and the cuirassiers of Travers; of their 1,200 horses there remained 600; of three lieutenant-colonels, two lay on the ground—Hamilton wounded, Mather killed. Ponsonby had fallen, pierced with seven thrusts of a lance. Gordon was dead, Marsh was dead. Two divisions, the fifth and the sixth, were destroyed.

Hougomont yielding, La Haie Sainte taken, there was but one knot left—the centre. That still held. Wellington reinforced it. He called thither Hill, who was at Merbe Braine; and Chassé, who was at Braine l'Alleud.

The centre of the English army, slightly concave, very dense and very compact, held a strong position. It occupied the plateau of Mont St. Jean, with the village behind it and in front the declivity, which at that time was steep. At the rear it rested on this strong stone house, then an outlying property of Nivelles, which marks the intersection of the roads, a sixteenth century pile so solid that the balls ricochetted against it without injuring it. All about the plateau the English had cut away the hedges here and there, made embrasures in the hawthorns, thrust the mouth of a cannon between two branches, made loopholes in the thickets. Their artillery was in ambush under the shrubbery. This punic labor, undoubtedly fair in war, which allows snares, was so well done that Haxo, sent by the Emperor at nine o'clock in the morning to reconnoitre the enemy's batteries, saw nothing of it and returned to tell Napoleon that there was no obstacle except the two barricades across the Nivelles and Genappe roads. It was the season when grain is at its height; upon the verge of the plateau a battalion of Kempt's brigade, the 95th, armed with carbines, was lying in the tall wheat.

Thus supported and protected, the centre of the Anglo-Dutch army was well situated.

The danger of this position was the forest of Soignes, then contiguous to the battlefield and separated by the ponds of Groenendael and Boitsfort. An army could not retreat there without being routed; regiments would have been dissolved immediately and the artillery would have been lost in the swamps. A retreat, according to the opinion of many military men—contested by others, it is true—would have been an utter rout.

Wellington reinforced this centre by one of Chassé's brigades, taken from the right wing, and one of Wincke's from the left, in addition to Clinton's division. To his English, to Halkett's regiments, to Mitchell's brigade, to Maitland's guards, he gave as supports the infantry of Brunswick, the Nassau contingent, Kielmansegge's Hanoverians, and Ompteda's Germans. The right wing, as Charras says, was bent back behind the centre. An enormous battery was faced with sand-bags at the place where now stands what is called "The Waterloo Museum." Wellington had besides, in a little depression of the grounds, Somerset's Horse Guards, 1,400. This was the other half of that English cavalry so justly celebrated. Ponsonby destroyed, Somerset was left.

The battery, which, finished, would have been almost a redoubt, was disposed behind a very low garden wall, hastily covered with sand-bags and a broad, sloping bank of earth. This work was not finished; they had not time to stockade it.

Wellington, anxious, but impassible, was on horseback, and remained there the whole day in the same attitude, a little in front of the old mill of Mont St. Jean, which is still standing under an elm, which an Englishman, an enthusiastic vandal, has since bought for 200 francs, cut down and carried away. Wellington was frigidly heroic. The balls rained down. His aide-de-camp, Gordon, had just fallen at his side. Lord Hill, showing him a bursting shell, said: "My Lord, what are your instructions, and what orders do you leave us if you allow yourself to be killed?" "To follow my example," answered Wellington. To Clinton he said, laconically: "Hold this spot to the last man." The day was going badly. Wellington cried to his old companions of Talavera, Vittoria, and Salamanca: "Boys! we must not be beat; what would they say of us in England?"

About four o'clock the English line staggered backward. All at once only the artillery and the sharpshooters were seen on the crest of the plateau, the rest disappeared; the regiments, driven by the shells and bullets of the French, fell back into the valley now crossed by the cowpath of the farm of Mont St. Jean; a retrograde movement took place, the battle front of the English was slipping away, Wellington gave ground. "Beginning retreat!" cried Napoleon.

VII

NAPOLEON IN GOOD HUMOR

THE Emperor, although sick and hurt in his saddle by a local affliction, had never been in so good a humor as on that day. Since morning his impenetrable countenance had worn a smile. On the 18th of June, 1815, that profound soul, masked in marble, shone obscurely forth. The dark-browed man of Austerlitz was gay at Waterloo. The greatest when foredoomed present these contradictions. Our joys are shaded. The perfect smile belongs to God alone.

Ridet Cæsar, Pompius flebitt, said the legionaries of the Fulminatrix Legion. Pompey at this time was not to weep, but it is certain that Cæsar laughed.

From the previous evening, and in the night, at one o'clock, exploring on horseback, in the tempest and the rain, with Bertrand, the hills near Rossomme, and gratified to see the long line of English fires illuminating all the horizon from Frischemont to Braine l'Alleud, it had seemed to him that destiny, for which he had made an appointment for a certain day upon the field of Waterloo, was punctual; he stopped his horse, and remained some time motionless, watching the lightning and listening to the thunder; and this fatalist was heard to utter in the darkness these mysterious words: "We are in accord." Napoleon was deceived. They were no longer in accord.

He had not taken a moment's sleep; every instant of that night had brought him a new joy. He passed along the whole line of the advanced guards, stopping here and there to speak to the pickets. At 2:30 o'clock, near the wood of Hougomont, he heard the tread of a column in

march; he thought for a moment that Wellington was falling back. He said: "It is the English rearguard starting to get away. I shall take the 6,000 Englishmen who have just arrived at Ostend prisoners. He chatted freely; he had recovered that animation of the disembarkation of the 1st of March, when he showed to the grand marshal the enthusiastic peasant of Gulf Juan, crying: "Well, Bertrand, there is a reinforcement already." On the night of the 17th of June he made fun of Wellington: "This little Englishman must have his lesson," said Napoleon. The rain redoubled; it thundered while the Emperor was speaking.

At 3:30 o'clock in the morning one illusion was gone; officers sent out on a reconnoissance announced to him that the enemy was making no movement. Nothing was stirring, not a bivouac fire was extinguished. The English army was asleep. Deep silence was upon the earth; there was no noise save in the sky. At four o'clock a peasant was brought to him by the scouts; this peasant had acted as guide to a brigade of English cavalry, probably Vivian's brigade, on its way to take position at the village of Ohain at the extreme left. At five o'clock two Belgian deserters reported to him that they had just left their regiment and that the English army was expecting a battle. "So much the better," exclaimed Napoleon, "I would much rather cut them to pieces than repulse them."

In the morning he alighted in the mud upon the high bank at the corner of the road from Planchenoit, had a kitchen table and a peasant's chair brought from the farm of Rossomme, sat down with a bunch of straw for a carpet and spread out upon the table the plan of the battlefield, saying to Soult: "Pretty checker-board."

In consequence of the night's rain the convoys of provisions, mired in the softened roads, had not arrived at dawn; the soldiers had not slept and were wet and fasting; but for all this Napoleon cried out joyfully to Ney: "We have ninety chances in one hundred." At eight o'clock the Emperor's breakfast was brought. He had invited several generals. While breakfasting, it was related, that on the night but one before Wellington was at a ball in Brussels, given by the Duchess of Somerset; and Soult, rude soldier that he was, with his archbishop's face. said:

"The ball is to-day." The Emperor jested with Ney, who said: "Wellington will not be so simple as to wait for your Majesty." This was his manner usually. He was fond of joking, says Fleury de Chaboulon. His character at bottom was a playful humor, says Gourgaud. He abounded in pleasantries, oftener grotesque than witty, says Benjamin Constant. These gayeties of a giant are worthy of remembrance. He called his grenadiers "the growlers"; he would pinch their ears and would pull their mustaches. The Emperor did nothing but play tricks on us, so one of them said. During the mysterious voyage from the Island of Elba to France on the 27th of February in the open sea, the French brig-of-war *Zephyr* having met the brig *Inconstant* on which Napoleon was concealed, and having asked the *Inconstant* for news of Napoleon, the Emperor, who still had on his hat, with the white and amaranth cockade sprinkled with bees, adopted by him in the Island of Elba, took the speaking-trumpet with a laugh and answered himself: "The Emperor is getting on finely." He who laughs in this way is on familiar terms with events; Napoleon had several of these bursts of laughter during his Waterloo breakfast. After breakfast for a quarter of an hour he collected his thoughts; then two generals were seated on the bundle of straw, pen in hand and paper on knee, and the Emperor dictated the order of battle.

At nine o'clock, at the instant when the French army, drawn up and set in motion in five columns, was deployed, the divisions upon two lines, the artillery between the brigades, music at the head playing marches, with the rolling of drums and the sounding of trumpets—mighty, vast, joyous—a sea of casques, sabres, and bayonets in the horizon, the Emperor, excited, cried out and repeated: "Magnificent! magnificent!"

Between 9 and 10:30 o'clock the whole army, which seems incredible, had taken position and was ranged in six lines, forming, to repeat the expression of the Emperor, "the figure of six V's." A few moments after the formation of the line of battle, in the midst of this profound silence like that at the commencement of a storm which precedes the fight, seeing as they filed by the three batteries of twelve-pounders, detached by his orders from the three corps of D'Erlon, Reille, and Lobau, to commence the

action by attacking Mont St. Jean at the intersection of the roads from Nivelles and Genappe, the Emperor struck Haxo on the shoulder, saying: "There are twenty-four pretty girls, general."

Sure of the event, he encouraged with a smile as they passed before him the company of sappers of the first corps which he had designated to erect barricades in Mont St. Jean as soon as the village was carried. All this serenity was disturbed by but a word of haughty pity; on seeing massed at his left, at a place where there is to-day a great tomb, those wonderful Scotch Grays with their superb horses, he said: "It is a pity."

Then he mounted his horse, rode forward from Rossomme and chose for his point of view a narrow grassy ridge at the right of the road from Genappe to Brussels, which was his second station during the battle. The third station, that of seven o'clock, between La Belle Alliance and La Haie Sainte is terrible; it is a considerable hill which can still be seen, and behind which the guard was massed in a depression of the plain. About this hill the balls ricochetted over the paved road up to Napoleon. As at Brienne, he had over his head the whistling of balls and bullets. There have been gathered almost upon the spot pressed by his horse's feet crushed bullets, old sabre blades, and shapeless projectiles eaten by rust. *Scabra rubigine.* Some years ago a sixty-pound shell was dug up there, still loaded, the fuse having broken off even with the bomb. It was at this last station that the Emperor said to his guide, Lacoste, a hostile peasant, frightened, tied to a hussar's saddle, turning around at every volley of grape and trying to hide behind Napoleon: "Dolt, this is shameful. You will get yourself shot in the back." He who writes these lines has himself found in the loose slope of that hill by turning up the earth the remains of a bomb, disintegrated by the rust of forty-six years, and some old bits of iron which broke like alder twigs in his fingers.

The undulations of the diversely inclined plains which were the theatre of the encounter of Napoleon and Wellington are, as everybody knows, no longer what they were on the 18th of June, 1815. In taking from that fatal field wherewith to make its monument, its real form was destroyed; history, disconcerted, no longer recognizes her-

self upon it. To glorify it, it has been disfigured. Wellington, two years afterward, on seeing Waterloo, exclaimed: "They have changed my battlefield." Where to-day is the great pyramid of earth surmounted by the lion, there was a ridge which sunk away toward the Nivelles road in a practicable slope, but which, above the Genappe road, was almost an escarpment. The elevation of this escarpment may be measured to-day by the two great burial mounds which embank the road from Genappe to Brussels; the English tomb at the left, the German tomb at the right. There is no French tomb. For France that whole plain is a sepulchre. Thanks to the thousands and thousands of loads of earth used in the mound of 150 feet high and one-half a mile in circuit, the plateau of Mont St. Jean is accessible by a gentle slope. On the day of the battle, especially on the side of La Haie Sainte, the declivity was steep and abrupt. The descent was there so precipitous that the English artillery did not see the farm below them at the bottom of the valley, the centre of the combat. On the 18th of June, 1815, the rain had gullied out this steep descent still more; the mud made the ascent still more difficult; it was not merely laborious, but men actually stuck in the mire. Along the crest of the plateau ran a sort of ditch which could not possibly have been suspected by a distant observer.

What was this ditch? We will tell. Braine l'Alleud is a village of Belgium, Ohain is another. These villages, both hidden by the curving of the ground, are connected by a road about four miles long which crosses an undulating plain, often burying itself in the hills like a furrow, so that at certain points it is a ravine. In 1815, as now, this road cut the crest of the plateau of Mont St. Jean between the two roads from Genappe and Nivelles; only to-day it is on a level with the plain, whereas then it was sunk between high banks. Its two slopes were taken away for the monumental mound. That road was, and is still, a trench for the greater part of its length; a trench in some parts a dozen feet deep, the slopes of which are so steep as to slide down here and there, especially in winter, after showers. Accidents happen there. The road was so narrow at the entrance of Braine l'Alleud that a traveler was once crushed by a wagon, as is attested by a stone cross

standing near the cemetery, which gives the name of the dead: "M. Bernard Debrye, merchant of Brussels," and the date of the accident, 1637.* It was so deep at the plateau of Mont St. Jean that a peasant, Matthew Nicaise, had been crushed there in 1783 by the falling of the bank, as another stone cross attested. The top of this has disappeared in the changes; but its overturned pedestal is still visible upon the sloping bank at the left of the road between La Haie Sainte and the farm of Mont St. Jean.

On the day of the battle, this sunken road, of which nothing gave warning, along the crest of Mont St. Jean, a ditch at the summit of the escarpment, a trench concealed by the ground, was invisible, that is to say, terrible.

VIII

THE EMPEROR PUTS A QUESTION TO THE GUIDE LACOSTE

ON the morning of Waterloo, then, Napoleon was satisfied.

He was right. The plan of battle which he had conceived, as we have shown, was indeed admirable.

After the battle was once commenced, its very diverse fortune, the resistance of Hougomont, the tenacity of La Haie Sainte, Bauduin killed, Foy put *hors de combat,* the unexpected wall against which Soye's brigade was broken, the fatal blunder of Guilleminot in having neither grenades nor powder, the miring of the batteries, the fifteen pieces without escort cut off by Uxbridge in a deep cut of the road, the slight effect of the bombs that fell within the English lines, burying themselves in the soil softened by the rain and only succeeding in making volcanoes of mud, so that the explosion was changed into a splash; the use-

---

* The inscription is as follows:

DOM
CY A ETE ECRASE
PAR MALHEUR
SOUS UN CHARIOT
MONSIEUR BERNARD
DE BRYE MARCHAND
A BRUXELLE LE (illegible)
FEBVRIER 1637

lessness of Piré's demonstration upon Braine l'Alleud, all this cavalry, fifteen squadrons, almost destroyed, the English right wing hardly disturbed, the left wing hardly moved; the strange mistake of Ney in massing, instead of drawing out, the four divisions of the first corps, the depth of twenty-seven ranks and the front of 200 men offered up in this manner to grape, the frightful gaps made by the balls in these masses, the lack of connection between the attacking columns, the slanting battery suddenly unmasked upon their flank, Bourgeois, Donzelot, and Durutte entangled, Quiot repulsed, Lieutenant Vieux, that Hercules sprung from the Polytechnic School, wounded at the moment when he was beating down with the blows of an axe the door of La Haie Sainte under the plunging fire of the English barricade barring the turn of the road from Genappe to Brussels, Marcognet's division, caught between infantry and cavalry, shot down at arm's-length in the wheat field by Best and Pack, sabred by Ponsonby, his battery of seven pieces spiked, the Prince of Saxe-Weimar holding and keeping Frischemont and Smohain in spite of Count d'Erlon, the colors of the 105th taken, the colors of the 43d taken, this Prussian Black Hussar, brought in by the scouts of the flying column of 300 Chasseurs scouring the country between Wavre and Planchenoit, the disquieting things that this prisoner had said, Grouchy's delay, the 1,500 men killed in less than an hour in the orchard of Hougomont, the 1,800 men fallen in still less time around La Haie Sainte—all these stormy events, passing like battle-clouds before Napoleon, had hardly disturbed his countenance, and had not darkened its imperial expression of certainty. Napoleon was accustomed to look upon war fixedly; he never made, figure by figure, the tedious addition of details; the figures mattered little to him, provided they gave this total: Victory; though beginnings went wrong he was not alarmed at it, he who believed himself master and possessor of the end; he knew how to wait, believing himself beyond contingency, and he treated destiny as an equal treats an equal. He appeared to say to Fate: "Thou wouldst not dare."

Half light and half shadow, Napoleon felt himself protected in the right, and tolerated in the wrong. He had, or believed he had, a connivance, one might almost say a

complicity, with events, equivalent to the ancient invulnerability.

However, when one has Beresina, Leipsic, and Fontainebleau behind him, it seems as if he might distrust Waterloo. A mysterious frown is becoming visible in the depth of the sky.

At the moment when Wellington drew back Napoleon started up. He saw the plateau of Mont St. Jean suddenly laid bare and the front of the English army disappear. It rallied, but kept concealed. The Emperor half rose in his stirrups. The flash of a victory passed into his eyes.

Wellington hurled back on the Forest of Soignes and destroyed; that was the final overthrow of England by France; it was Cressy, Poitiers, Malplaquet, and Ramillies avenged. The man of Marengo was wiping out Agincourt.

The Emperor then, contemplating this terrible turn of fortune, swept his glass for the last time over every point of the battlefield. His guard, standing behind with grounded arms, looked up to him with a sort of religion. He was reflecting; he was examining the slopes, noting the ascents, scrutinizing the tufts of the trees, the square rye field, the footpath; he seemed to count every bush. He looked for some time at the English barricades on the two roads, two large abatis of trees, that on the Genappe road above La Haie Sainte, armed with two cannon, which alone, of all the English artillery, bore upon the bottom of the field of battle, and that of the Nivelles road, where glistened the Dutch bayonets of Chassé's brigade. He noticed near that barricade the old chapel of St. Nicholas, painted white, which is at the corner of the crossroad toward Braine l'Alleud. He bent over and spoke in an undertone to the guide Lacoste. The guide made a negative sign of the head, probably treacherous.

The Emperor rose up and reflected. Wellington had fallen back. It remained only to complete this repulse by a crushing charge.

Napoleon, turning abruptly, sent off a courier at full speed to Paris to announce that the battle was won.

Napoleon was one of those geniuses who rule the thunder.

He had found his thunderbolt.

He ordered Milhaud's cuirassiers to carry the plateau of Mont St. Jean.

IX

THE UNLOOKED FOR

THEY were 3,500. They formed a line of half a mile. They were gigantic men on colossal horses. There were twenty-six squadrons, and they had behind them, as a support, the division of Lefebvre-Desnouettes, the 106 gendarmes d'elite, the chasseurs of the guard, 1,197 men, and the lancers of the guard, 880 lances. They wore casques without plumes, and cuirasses of wrought iron, with horse-pistols in their holsters and long sabre-swords. In the morning they had been the admiration of the whole army, when, at nine o'clock, with trumpets sounding, and all the bands playing *"Veillons au salut de l'empire,"* they came, in heavy columns, one of their batteries on their flank, the other at their centre, and deployed in two ranks between the Genappe road and Frischemont, and took their position of battle in this powerful second line, so wisely made up by Napoleon, which, having at its extreme left the cuirassiers of Kellermann and at its extreme right the cuirassiers of Milhaud, had, so to speak, two wings of iron.

Aide-de-camp Bernard brought them the Emperor's order. Ney drew his sword and placed himself at their head. The enormous squadrons began to move.

Then was seen a fearful sight.

All this cavalry, with sabres drawn, banners waving, and trumpets sounding, formed in column by divisions, descended with an even movement and as one man—with the precision of a bronze battering-ram opening a breach —the hill of La Belle Alliance, sank into the formidable depth where so many men had already fallen, disappeared in the smoke, then rising from this valley of shadow, reappeared on the other side, still compact and serried, mounting at full trot, through a cloud of grape emptying itself upon them, the frightful acclivity of mud of the plateau of Mont St. Jean. They rose, serious, menacing, imperturbable; in the intervals of the musketry and artillery could

be heard the sound of this colossal tramp. Being in two divisions, they formed two columns; Wathier's division had the right, Delord's the left. From a distance they would be taken for two immense serpents of steel stretching themselves toward the crest of the plateau. That ran through the battle like a prodigy.

Nothing like it had been seen since the taking of the grand redoubt at La Moscowa by the heavy cavalry; Murat was not there, but Ney was there. It seemed as if this mass had become a monster, and had but a single mind. Each squadron undulated and swelled like the ring of a polyp. They could be seen through the thick smoke as it was broken here and there. It was one pell-mell of casques, cries, sabres, a furious bounding of horses among the cannon, and the flourish of trumpets, a terrible and disciplined tumult; over all the cuirasses, like the scales of a hydra.

These recitals appear to belong to another age. Something like this vision appeared, doubtless, in the old Orphic epics which tell of centaurs, antique hippanthropes, those titans with human faces, and chests like horses, whose gallop scaled Olympus, horrible, invulnerable, sublime; at once gods and beasts.

An odd numerical coincidence, twenty-six battalions were to receive these twenty-six squadrons. Behind the crest of the plateau, under cover of the masked battery, the English infantry, formed in thirteen squares, two battalions to the square, and upon two lines—seven on the first and six on the second—with musket to the shoulder, and eye upon their sights, waiting, calm, silent, and immovable. They could not see the cuirassiers, and the cuirassiers could not see them. They listened to the rising of this tide of men. They heard the increasing sound of 3,000 horses, the alternate and measured striking of their hoofs at full trot, the rattling of the cuirasses, the clicking of sabres, and a sort of fierce roar of the coming host. There was a moment of fearful silence, then, suddenly, a long line of raised arms brandishing sabres appeared above the crest, with casques, trumpets, and standards, and 3,000 faces with gray mustaches, crying: "Vive l'Empereur!" All this cavalry debouched on the plateau, and it was like the beginning of an earthquake.

All at once, tragic to relate, at the left of the English, and on our right, the head of the column of cuirassiers reared with a frightful clamor. Arrived at the culminating point of the crest, unmanageable, full of fury, and bent upon the extermination of the squares and cannons, the cuirassiers saw between themselves and the English a ditch, a grave. It was the sunken road of Ohain.

It was a frightful moment. There was the ravine, unlooked for, yawning at the very feet of the horses, two fathoms deep between its double slope. The second rank pushed in the first, the third pushed in the second; the horses reared, threw themselves over, fell upon their backs, and struggled with their feet in the air, piling up and overturning their riders; no power to retreat; the whole column was nothing but a projectile. The force acquired to crush the English crushed the French. The inexorable ravine could not yield until it was filled; riders and horses rolled in together pell-mell, grinding each other, making common flesh in this dreadful gulf, and when this grave was full of living men the rest marched over them and passed on. Almost a third of the Dubois' brigade sank into this abyss.

Here the loss of the battle began.

A local tradition, which evidently exaggerates, says that 2,000 horses and 1,500 men were buried in the sunken road of Ohain. This undoubtedly comprises all the other bodies thrown into this ravine on the morrow after the battle.

Napoleon, before ordering this charge of Milhaud's cuirassiers, had examined the ground, but could not see this hollow road, which did not make even a wrinkle on the surface of the plateau. Warned, however, and put on his guard by the little white chapel which marks its junction with the Nivelles road, he had, probably, on the contingency of an obstacle, put a question to the guide, Lacoste. The guide had answered no. It may almost be said that from this shake of a peasant's head came the catastrophe of Napoleon.

Still other fatalities must arise.

Was it possible that Napoleon should win this battle? We answer—no! Why? Because of Wellington? Because of Blücher? No! Because of God.

For Bonaparte to be conqueror at Waterloo was not in the law of the nineteenth century. Another series of facts were preparing in which Napoleon had no place. The ill-will of events had long been announced.

It was time that this vast man should fall.

The excessive weight of this man in human destiny disturbed the equilibrium. This individual counted of himself alone more than the universe besides. These plethoras of all human vitality concentrated in a single head, the world mounting to the brain of one man, would be fatal to civilization if they should endure. The moment had come for incorruptible supreme equity to look to it. Probably the principles and elements upon which regular gravitations in the moral order as well as in the material depend, began to murmur. Reeking blood, overcrowded cemeteries, weeping mothers—these are formidable pleaders. When the earth is suffering from a surcharge there are mysterious moanings from the deeps which the heavens hear.

Napoleon had been impeached before the Infinite and his fall was decreed.

He vexed God.

Waterloo is not a battle; it is the change of front of the universe.

X

THE PLATEAU OF MONT ST. JEAN

AT the same time with the ravine, the artillery was unmasked.

Sixty cannon and the thirteen squares thundered and flashed into the cuirassiers. The brave General Delord gave the military salute to the English battery.

All the English flying artillery took position in the squares at a gallop. The cuirassiers had not even time to breathe. The disaster of the sunken road had decimated but not discouraged them. They were men who, diminished in number, grew greater in heart.

Wathier's column alone had suffered from the disaster; Delord's, which Ney had sent obliquely to the left, as if he had a presentiment of the snare, arrived entire.

The cuirassiers hurled themselves upon the English squares.

At full gallop, with free rein, their sabres in their teeth and their pistols in their hands, the attack began.

There are moments in battle when the soul hardens a man even to changing the soldier into a statue, and all this flesh becomes granite. The English battalions, desperately assailed, did not yield an inch.

Then it was frightful.

All sides of the English squares were attacked at once. A whirlwind of frenzy enveloped them. This frigid infantry remained impassible. The first rank, with knee on the ground, received the cuirassiers on their bayonets, the second shot them down; behind the second rank, the cannoneers loaded their guns, the front of the square opened, made way for an eruption of grape, and closed again. The cuirassiers answered by rushing upon them with crushing force. Their great horses reared, trampled, upon the ranks, leaped over the bayonets and fell, gigantic in the midst of these four living walls. The balls made gaps in the ranks of the cuirassiers, the cuirassiers made breaches in the squares. Files of men disappeared, ground down beneath the horses' feet. Bayonets were buried in the bellies of these centaurs. Hence a monstrosity of wounds never, perhaps, seen elsewhere. The squares, consumed by this furious cavalry, closed up without wavering. Inexhaustible in grape, they kept up an explosion in the midst of their assailants. It was a monstrous sight. These squares were battalions no longer, they were craters; these cuirassiers were cavalry no longer, they were a tempest. Each square was a volcano attacked by a thunder-cloud; the lava fought with the lightning.

The square on the extreme right, the most exposed of all, being in the open field, was almost annihilated at the first shock. It was formed of the 75th regiment of Highlanders. The piper in the centre, while the work of extermination was going on, profoundly oblivious of all about him, casting down his melancholy eye full of the shadows of forests and lakes, seated upon a drum, his bagpipe under his arm, was playing his mountain airs. These Scotchmen died thinking of Ben Lothian, as the Greeks died remembering Argos. The sabre of a cuirassier, striking

down the pibroch and the arm which bore it, caused the strain to cease by killing the player.

The cuirassiers, relatively few in number, lessened by the catastrophe of the ravine, had to contend with almost the whole of the English army; but they multiplied themselves; each man became equal to ten. Nevertheless, some Hanoverian battalions fell back. Wellington saw it and remembered his cavalry. Had Napoleon, at that very moment, remembered his infantry, he would have won the battle. This forgetfulness was his great, fatal blunder.

Suddenly the assailing cuirassiers perceived that they were assailed. The English cavalry was upon their back. Before them the squares, behind them Somerset; Somerset with the 1,400 dragoon guards. Somerset had on his right Dornberg, with his German light-horse, and on his left Trip, with the Belgian carbineers. The cuirassiers, attacked front, flank, and rear, by infantry and cavalry, were compelled to face in all directions. What was that to them? They were a whirlwind. Their valor became unspeakable.

Besides, they had behind them the ever-thundering artillery. All that was necessary in order to wound such men in the back. One of their cuirasses, with a hole in the left shoulder-plate, made by a musket-ball, is in the collection of the Waterloo Museum.

With such Frenchmen only such Englishmen could cope.

It was no longer a conflict; it was a darkness, a fury, a giddy vortex of souls and courage, a hurricane of sword-flashes. In an instant the 1,400 horse guards were but 800. Fuller, their lieutenant-colonel, fell dead. Ney rushed up with the lancers and chasseurs of Lefebvre-Desnouettes. The plateau of Mont St. Jean was taken, retaken, and taken again. The cuirassiers left the cavalry to return to the infantry, or, more correctly, all this terrible multitude wrestled with each other without letting go their hold. The squares still held. There were twelve assaults. Ney had four horses killed under him. Half of the cuirassiers lay on the plateau. This struggle lasted two hours.

The English army was terribly shaken. There is no doubt, if they had not been crippled in their first shock by the disaster of the sunken road, the cuirassiers would have

overwhelmed the centre and decided the victory. This wonderful cavalry astounded Clinton, who had seen Talavera and Badajos. Wellington, though three-fourths conquered, was struck with heroic admiration. He said, in a low voice: "Splendid!"

The cuirassiers annihilated seven squares out of thirteen, took or spiked sixty pieces of cannon, and took from the English regiments six colors, which three cuirassiers and three chasseurs of the guard carried to the Emperor before the farm of La Belle Alliance.

The situation of Wellington was growing worse. This strange battle was like a duel between two wounded infuriates who, while yet fighting and resisting, lose all their blood. Which of the two shall fall first?

The struggle of the plateau continued.

How far did the cuirassiers penetrate? None can tell. One thing is certain: the day after the battle a cuirassier and his horse were found dead under the frame of the hayscales at Mont St. Jean, at the point where the four roads from Nivelles, Genappe, La Hulpe, and Brussels meet. This horseman had pierced the English lines. One of the men who took away the body still lives at Mont St. Jean. His name is Dehaze; he was then eighteen years old.

Wellington felt that he was giving way. The crisis was upon him.

The cuirassiers had not succeeded, in this sense, that the centre was not broken. All holding the plateau, nobody held it; and, in fact, it remained for the most part with the English. Wellington held the village and the crowning plain; Ney held only the crest and the slope. On both sides they seemed rooted in this funeral soil.

But the enfeeblement of the English appeared irremediable. The hemorrhage of this army was horrible. Kempt, on the left wing, called for reinforcements. "Impossible," answered Wellington, "we must die on the spot we now occupy." Almost at the same moment—singular coincidence, which depicts the exhaustion of both armies—Ney sent to Napoleon for infantry, and Napoleon exclaimed: "Infantry! where does he expect me to get them? Does he expect me to make them?"

However, the English army was furthest gone. The furious onslaughts of these great squadrons, with iron

cuirasses and steel breast-plates, had ground up the infantry. A few men about a flag marked the place of a regiment; battalions were now commanded by captains or lieutenants. Alten's division, already so cut up at La Haie Sainte, was almost destroyed; the intrepid Belgians of Van Kluze's brigade strewed the rye field along the Nivelles road; there were hardly any left of those Dutch grenadiers who, in 1811, joined to our ranks in Spain, fought against Wellington, and who, in 1815, rallied on the English side, fought against Napoleon. The loss of officers was heavy. Lord Uxbridge, who buried his leg next day, had a knee fractured. If, on the side of the French, in this struggle of the cuirassiers, Delord, l'Heriter, Colbert, Dnop, Travers, and Blancard were *hors de combat,* on the side of the English Alten was wounded, Barne was wounded, Delancey was killed, Van Meeren was killed, Ompteda was killed, the entire staff of Wellington was decimated, and England had the worst share in this balance of blood. The 2d regiment of foot guards had lost five lieutenant-colonels, four captains, and three ensigns; the first battalion of the 30th infantry had lost twenty-four officers and 112 soldiers; the 79th Highlanders had twenty-four officers wounded, eighteen officers killed, and 450 soldiers slain. Cumberland's Hanoverian hussars, an entire regiment, having at its head Colonel Hacke, who was afterward court-martialed and broken, had drawn rein before the fight, and were in flight in the forest of Soignes, spreading the panic as far as Brussels. Carts, ammunition-wagons, baggage-wagons, ambulances full of wounded, seeing the French gain ground and approach the forest, fled precipitately; the Dutch, sabred by the French cavalry, cried murder! From Vert Coucou to Groenendael, for a distance of nearly six miles in the direction toward Brussels, the roads, according to the testimony of witnesses still alive, were choked with fugitives. This panic was such that it reached the Prince of Condé at Malines, and Louis XVIII at Ghent. With the exception of the small reserve drawn up in echelon behind the hospital established at the farm of Mont St. Jean, and the brigades of Vivian and Vandeleur on the flank of the left wing, Wellington's cavalry was exhausted. A number of batteries lay dismounted. These facts are confessed by Si-

borne; and Pringle, exaggerating the disaster, says even that the Anglo-Dutch army was reduced to 34,000 men. The Iron Duke remained calm, but his lips were pale. The Austrian commissary, Vincent, the Spanish commissary, Olava, present at the battle in the English staff, thought the Duke was beyond hope. At five o'clock Wellington drew out his watch, and was heard to murmur these sombre words: "Blücher or night."

It was about this time that a distant line of bayonets glistened on the heights beyond Frischemont.

Here is the turning-point in this colossal drama.

XI

BAD GUIDE FOR NAPOLEON; GOOD GUIDE FOR BULOW

WE understand the bitter mistake of Napoleon; Grouchy hoped for, Blücher arriving; death instead of life.

Destiny has such turnings. Awaiting the world's throne, St. Helena became visible.

If the little cowboy, who acted as guide to Bulow, Blücher's lieutenant, had advised him to debouch from the forest above Frischemont rather than below Planchenoit, the shaping of the nineteenth century would perhaps have been different. Napoleon would have won the battle of Waterloo. By any other road than below Planchenoit, the Prussian army would have brought up at a ravine impassable for artillery, and Bulow would not have arrived.

Now, an hour of delay, as the Prussian general, Muffling, declares, and Blücher would not have found Wellington in position; "the battle was lost."

It was time, we have seen, that Bulow should arrive. He had bivouacked at Dion le Mont, and started on at dawn. But the roads were impracticable, and his division stuck in the mire. The cannon sank to the hubs in the ruts. Furthermore, he had to cross the Dyle on the narrow bridge of Wavre; the street leading to the bridge had been fired by the French; the caissons and artillery wagons, being unable to pass between two rows of burning houses, had to wait till the fire was extinguished. It was noon before Bulow could reach Chapelle St. Lambert.

Had the action commenced two hours earlier it would have been finished at four o'clock, and Blücher would have fallen upon a field already won by Napoleon. Such are these immense chances, proportioned to an infinity, which we can not grasp.

As early as midday the Emperor, first of all, with his field-glass, perceived in the extreme horizon something which fixed his attention. He said: "I see yonder a cloud which appears to me to be troops." Then he asked the Duke of Dalmatio: "Soult, what do you see toward Chapelle St. Lambert?" The marshal, turning his glass that way, answered: "Four or five thousand men, sire. Grouchy, of course." Meanwhile, it remained motionless in the haze. The glasses of the whole staff studied "the cloud" pointed out by the Emperor. Some said: "They are columns halting." The most said: "It is trees." The fact is that the cloud did not stir. The Emperor detached Domon's division of light cavalry to reconnoitre this obscure point.

Bulow, in fact, had not moved. His vanguard was very weak and could do nothing. He had to wait for the bulk of his *corps d'armée,* and he was ordered to concentrate his force before entering into line; but at five o'clock, seeing Wellington's peril, Blücher ordered Bulow to attack, and uttered these remarkable words: "We must give the English army a breathing spell."

Soon after, the divisions of Losthin, Hiller, Hacke, and Ryssel deployed in front of Lobau's corps, the cavalry of Prince William of Prussia debouched from the wood of Paris, Planchenoit was in flames, and the Prussian balls began to rain down even in the ranks of the guard in reserve behind Napoleon.

XII

THE GUARD

THE rest is known; the irruption of a third army, the battle thrown out of joint, eighty-six pieces of artillery suddenly thundering forth, Pirch the First coming up with Bulow, Ziethen's cavalry led by Blücher in person, the French crowded back, Marcognet swept from the plateau of Ohain, Durutte dislodged from Papelotte, Donzelot and Quiot recoiling, Lobau taken en encharpe, a new battle

falling at nightfall upon our dismantled regiments, the whole English line assuming the offensive and pushed forward, the gigantic gap made in the French army, the English grape and the Prussian grape lending mutual aid, extermination, disaster in front, disaster in flank, the guard entering into line amid this terrible crumbling.

Feeling that they were going to their death they cried out: *"Vive l'Empereur!"* There is nothing more touching in history than this death agony bursting forth in acclamations.

The sky had been overcast all day. All at once, at this very moment—it was eight o'clock at night—the clouds in the horizon broke, and through the elms on the Nivelles road streamed the sinister red light of the setting sun. The rising sun shone upon Austerlitz.

Each battalion of the guard, for this final effort, was commanded by a general. Friant, Michel, Roguet, Harlet, Mallet, Poret de Morvan, were there. When the tall caps of the grenadiers of the guard, with their large eagle plates, appeared, symmetrical, drawn up in line, calm, in the smoke of that conflict, the enemy felt respect for France; they thought they saw twenty victories entering upon the field of battle with wings extended, and those who were conquerors, thinking themselves conquered, recoiled; but Wellington cried, "Up, guards, and at them!" The red regiment of English Guards, lying behind the hedges, rose up, a shower of grape riddled the tri-colored flag fluttering about our eagles, all hurled themselves forward, and the final carnage began. The Imperial Guard felt the army slipping away around them in the gloom, and the vast overthrow of the rout; they heard the *"Sauve qui peut!"* which had replaced the *"Vive l'Empereur!"* and, with flight behind them, they held on their course, battered more and more and dying faster and faster at every step. There were no weak souls or cowards there. The privates of that band were as heroic as their general. Not a man flinched from the suicide.

Ney, desperate, great in all the grandeur of accepted death, bared himself to every blow in this tempest. He had his horse killed under him. Reeking with sweat, fire in his eyes, froth upon his lips, his uniform unbuttoned, one of his epaulets half cut away by the sabre stroke of a

horse guard, his badge of the grand eagle pierced by a ball, bloody, covered with mud, magnificent, a broken sword in his hand, he said: "Come and see how a marshal of France dies upon the field of battle!" But in vain; he did not die. He was haggard and exasperated. He flung this question at Drouet d'Erlon: "What! are you not going to die?" He cried out in the midst of all this artillery which was mowing down a handful of men: "Is there nothing, then, for me? Oh! I would that all these English balls were buried in my body!" Unhappy man! thou wast reserved for French bullets!

XIII

THE CATASTROPHE

THE rout behind the guard was dismal.

The army fell back rapidly from all sides at once, from Hougomont, from La Haie Sainte, from Papelotte, from Planchenoit. The cry: "Treachery!" was followed by the cry: "*Sauve qui peut!*" A disbanding army is a thaw. The whole bends, cracks, snaps, floats, rolls, falls, crushes, hurries, plunges. Mysterious disintegration. Ney borrows a horse, leaps upon him, and without hat, cravat, or sword, plants himself in the Brussels road, arresting at once the English and the French. He endeavors to hold the army, to call them back, he reproaches them, he grapples with the rout. He is swept away. The soldiers flee from him, crying: "*Vive l'Marshal Ney!*" Durutte's two regiments come and go, frightened and tossed between the sabres of the Uhlans and the fire of the brigades of Kempt, Best, Pack, and Rylandt; rout is the worst of all conflicts; friends slay each other in their flight; squadrons and battalions are crushed and dispersed against each other, enormous foam of the battle. Lobau at one extremity, like Reille at the other, is rolled away in the flood. In vain does Napoleon make walls with the remains of the guard; in vain does he expend his reserve squadrons in a last effort. Quiot gives way before Vivian, Kellermann before Vandeleur, Lobau before Bulow, Moraud before Pirch, Doman and Subervie before Prince William of Prussia. Guyot, who had led the Emperor's squadrons to the charge, falls under the feet of the English Horse. Napoleon gallops

along the fugitives, harangues them, urges, threatens, entreats. The mouths which in the morning were crying *"Vive l'Empereur!"* are now agape; he is hardly recognized. The Prussian cavalry, just come up, spring forward, fling themselves upon the enemy, sabre, cut, hack, kill, exterminate. Teams rush off, the guns are left to the care of themselves; the soldiers of the train unhitch the caissons and take the horses to escape; wagons upset, with their four wheels in the air, block up the road, and are accessories of massacre. They crush and they crowd; they trample upon the living and the dead. Arms are broken. A multitude fills roads, paths, bridges, plains, hills, valleys, woods, choked up by this flight of 40,000 men. Cries, despair; knapsacks and muskets cast into the rye; passages forced at the point of the sword; no more comrades, no more officers, no more generals; inexpressible dismay. Ziethen sabring France at his ease. Lions become kids. Such was this flight.

At Genappe there was an effort to turn back, to form a line, to make a stand. Lobau rallied 300 men. The entrance to the village was barricaded, but at the first volley of Prussian grape all took to flight again and Lobau was captured. The marks of that volley of grape are still to be seen upon the old gable of a brick ruin at the right of the road, a short distance before entering Genappe. The Prussians rushed into Genappe, furious, doubtless, at having conquered so little. The pursuit was monstrous. Blücher gave orders to kill all. Roguet had set this sad example by threatening with death every French grenadier who should bring him a Prussian prisoner. Blücher surpassed Roguet. The general of the young guard, Duhesme, caught at the door of a tavern in Genappe, gave up his sword to a hussar of death, who took the sword and killed the prisoner. The victory was completed by the assassination of the vanquished. Let us punish, since we are history; old Blücher disgraced himself. This ferocity filled the disaster to the brim. The desperate rout passed through Genappe, passed through Quatre Bras, passed through Sombreffe, passed through Frasness, passed through Thuin, passed through Charleroi, and stopped only at the frontier. Alas! who now was flying in such wise? The grand army.

This madness, this terror, this falling to ruins of the highest bravery which ever astonished history, can that be without cause? No. The shadow of an enormous right hand rests on Waterloo. It is the day of destiny. A power above man controlled that day. Hence, the loss of mind in dismay; hence, all these great souls yielding up their swords. Those who had conquered Europe fell to the ground, having nothing more to say or to do, feeling a terrible presence in the darkness. *Hoc erat in fatis.* That day the perspective of the human race changed. Waterloo is the hinge of the nineteenth century. The disappearance of the great man was necessary for the advent of the great century. One, to whom there is no reply, took it in charge. The panic of heroes is explained. In the battle of Waterloo there is more than a cloud, there is a meteor. God passed over it.

In the gathering night, on a field near Genappe, Bernard and Bertrand seized by a flap of his coat and stopped a haggard, thoughtful, gloomy man, who, dragged thus far by the current of the rout, had dismounted, passed the bridle of his horse under his arm, and, with bewildered eye, was returning alone toward Waterloo. It was Napoleon endeavoring to advance again, mighty somnambulist of a vanished dream.

XIV

THE LAST SQUARE

A FEW squares of the guard, immovable in the flow of the rout as rocks in running water, held out until night. Night approaching, and death also, they awaited this double shadow, and yielded, unfalteringly, to its embrace. Each regiment, isolated from the others, and having no further communication with the army, which was broken in all directions, was dying alone. They had taken position, for this last struggle, some upon the heights of Rossomme, others in the plain of Mont St. Jean. There, abandoned, conquered, terrible, these sombre squares suffered formidable martyrdom. Ulm, Wagram, Jena, Friedland, were dying in them.

At dusk, toward nine o'clock in the evening, at the foot of the plateau of Mont St. Jean, there remained but one.

In this fatal valley, at the bottom of that slope which had been climbed by the cuirassiers, inundated now by the English masses, under the converging fire of the victorious artillery of the enemy, under a frightful storm of projectiles, this square fought on. It was commanded by an obscure officer whose name was Cambronne. At every discharge the square grew less, but returned the fire. It replied to grape by bullets, narrowing in its four walls continually. Afar off, the fugitives, stopping for a moment out of breath, heard in the darkness this dismal thunder decreasing.

When this legion was reduced to a handful, when their flag was reduced to a shred, when their muskets, exhausted of ammunition, were reduced to nothing but clubs, when the pile of corpses was larger than the group of the living, there spread among the conquerors a sort of sacred terror about these sublime martyrs, and the English artillery, stopping to take breath, was silent. It was a kind of respite. These combatants had about them, as it were, a swarm of spectres, the outlines of men on horseback, the black profile of the cannons, the white sky seen through the wheels and the gun-carriages; the colossal death's head which heroes always see in the smoke of the battle was advancing upon them and glaring at them. They could hear in the gloom of the twilight the loading of the pieces; the lighted matches, like tigers' eyes in the night, made a circle about their heads; all the linstocks of the English batteries approached the guns, when, touched by their heroism, holding the death-moment suspended over these men, an English general, Colville, according to some, Maitland, according to others, cried to them: "Brave Frenchmen, surrender!" Cambronne answered: "Merde!"

XV

CAMBRONNE

OUT of respect to the French reader, the finest word, perhaps, that a Frenchman ever uttered can not be repeated to him. We are prohibited from embalming a sublimity in history.

At our own risk and peril we violate that prohibition.

Among these giants, then, there was one Titan—Cambronne.

To speak that word, and then to die—what could be more grand! for to accept death is to die, and it is not the fault of this man, if, in the storm of grape, he survived.

The man who won the battle of Waterloo is not Napoleon put to rout; nor Wellington, giving way at four o'clock, desperate at five o'clock; nor Blücher, who did not fight; the man who won the battle of Waterloo was Cambronne.

To fulminate such a word at the thunderbolt which kills you is victory.

To make this answer to disaster, to say this to destiny, to give this base for the future lion, to fling down this reply at the rain of the previous night, at the treacherous wall of Hougomont, at the sunken road of Ohain, at the delay of Grouchy, at the arrival of Blücher, to be ironical in the sepulchre, to act so as to remain upright after one shall have fallen, to drown in two syllables the European coalition, to offer to kings these privities already known to the Cæsars, to make the last of words the first, by associating it with the glory of France, to close Waterloo insolently by a Mardi Gras, to complete Leonidas by Rabelais, to sum up this victory in a supreme word which can not be pronounced, to lose the field, and to preserve history, after this carnage to have the laugh on his side is immense.

It is an insult to the thunderbolt. That attains the grandeur of Æschylus.

This word of Cambronne's gives the effect of a fracture. It is the breaking of a heart by scorn; it is an overplus of agony in explosion. Who conquered? Wellington? No. Without Blücher he would have been lost. Blücher? No. If Wellington had not commenced Blücher could not have finished. This Cambronne, this passer at the last hour, this unknown soldier, this infinitesimal of war, feels that there is there a lie in a catastrophe, doubly bitter; and at the moment when he is bursting with rage he is offered this mockery—life. How can he restrain himself? They are there, all the kings of Europe, the fortunate generals, the thundering Joves, they have 100,000 victorious soldiers, and behind the 100,000, 1,000,000; their guns, with matches lighted, are agape; they have the imperial guard and the

grand army under their feet; they have crushed Napoleon, and Cambronne only remains; there is none but this worm of the earth to protest. He will protest. Then he seeks for a word as one seeks for a sword. He froths at the mouth, and this froth is the word. Before this mean and monstrous victory, before this victory without victors, this desperate man straightens himself up, he suffers its enormity, but he establishes its nothingness; and he does more than spit upon it; and overwhelmed in numbers and material strength he finds in the soul an expression—ordure. We repeat it, to say that, to do that, to find that, is to be the conqueror.

The soul of great days entered into this unknown man at that moment of death. Cambronne finds the word of Waterloo, as Rouget de l'Isle finds the Marseillaise, through superior inspiration. An influence from the divine afflatus detaches itself and passes over these men, and they tremble, and the one sings the supreme song and the other utters the terrible cry. This word of titanic scorn Cambronne throws down not merely to Europe, in the name of the Empire that would be but little; he throws it down to the past, in the name of the Revolution. It is heard, and men recognize in Cambronne the old soul of the giants. It seems as if it were a speech of Danton or a roar of Kleber.

To this word of Cambronne, the English voice replied: "Fire!" the batteries flamed, the hill trembled, from all those brazen throats went forth a final vomiting of grape, terrific; a vast smoke, dusky white in the light of the rising moon, rolled out, and when the smoke was dissipated there was nothing left. That formidable remnant was annihilated; the guard was dead. The four walls of the living redoubt had fallen; hardly could a quivering be distinguished here and there among the corpses; and thus the French legions, grander than the Roman legions, expired at Mont St. Jean on ground soaked in rain and blood, in the sombre wheat-fields, at the spot where now, at four o'clock in the morning, whistling and gayly whipping up his horse, Joseph passes, who drives the mail from Nivelles.

XVI

QUOT LIBRAS IN DUCE?

THE battle of Waterloo is an enigma. It is as obscure to those who won it as to him who lost it. To Napoleon it is a panic;* Blücher sees in it only fire; Wellington comprehends nothing of it. Look at the reports. The bulletins are confused, the commentaries are foggy. The former stammer, the latter falter. Jomini separates the battle of Waterloo into four periods; Muffling divides it into three tides of fortune; Charras alone, though upon some points our appreciation differs from his, has seized with his keen glance the characteristic lineaments of that catastrophe of human genius struggling with Divine destiny. All the other historians are blinded by the glare and are groping about in that blindness. A day of lightnings, indeed, the downfall of the military monarchy, which, to the great amazement of kings, has dragged with it all kingdoms, the fall of force, the overthrow of war.

In this event, bearing the impress of superhuman necessity, man's part is nothing.

Does taking away Waterloo from Wellington and from Blücher detract anything from England and Germany? No. Neither illustrious England nor august Germany is in question in the problem of Waterloo. Thank heaven, nations are great aside from the dismal chances of the sword. Neither Germany nor England nor France is held in a scabbard. At this day when Waterloo is only a clicking of sabres, above Blücher Germany has Goethe, and above Wellington England has Byron. A vast uprising of ideas is peculiar to our century, and in this aurora England and Germany have a magnificent share. They are majestic because they think. The higher plane which they bring to civilization is intrinsic to them; it comes from themselves and not from an accident. The advancement which they have made in the nineteenth century does not spring from Waterloo. It is only barbarous nations

---

* "A battle ended, a day finished, false measures repaired, greater successes assured for the morrow; all was lost by a moment of panic." —Napoleon. "Dictations at St. Helena."

who have a sudden growth after a victory. It is the fleeting vanity of the streamlet swelled by the storm. Civilized nations, especially in our times, are not exalted or abased by the good or bad fortune of a captain. Their specific gravity in the human race results from something more than a combat. Their honor, thank God, their dignity, their light, their genius, are not numbers that heroes and conquerors, those gamblers, can cast into the lottery of battles. Oftentimes a battle lost is progress attained. Less glory, more liberty. The drum is silent, reason speaks. It is the game at which he who loses gains. Let us speak, then, coolly of Waterloo on both sides. Let us render unto fortune the things that are fortune's, and unto God the things that are God's. What is Waterloo. A victory? No. A prize.

A prize won by Europe, paid by France.

It was not much to put a lion there.

Waterloo, moreover, is the strangest encounter in history. Napoleon and Wellington; they are not enemies, they are opposites. Never has God, who takes pleasure in antitheses, made a more striking contrast and a more extraordinary meeting. On one side, precision, foresight, geometry, prudence, retreat assured, reserves economized, obstinate composure, imperturbable method, strategy to profit by the ground, tactics to balance battalions, carnage drawn to the line, war directed watch in hand, nothing left voluntarily to chance, ancient classic courage, absolute correctness; on the other, intuition, inspiration, a military marvel, a superhuman instinct; a flashing glance, a mysterious something which gazes like the eagle and strikes like the thunderbolt, prodigious art in disdainful impetuosity, all the mysteries of a deep soul, intimacy with destiny; river, plain, forest, hill, commanded, and in some sort forced to obey, the despot going even so far as to tyrannize over the battlefield, faith in a star joined to strategic science, increasing it, but disturbing it. Wellington was the Barrême of war, Napoleon was its Michelangelo, and this time genius was vanquished by calculation.

On both sides they were expecting somebody. It was the exact calculator who succeeded. Napoleon expected Grouchy; he did not come. Wellington expected Blücher; he came.

Wellington is classic war taking her revenge. Bonaparte, in his dawn, had met her in Italy, and defeated her superbly. The old owl fled before the young vulture. Ancient tactics had been not only thunderstruck, but had received mortal offence! What was this Corsican of 26? What meant this brilliant novice who, having everything against him, nothing for him, with no provisions, no munitions, no cannon, no shoes, almost without an army, with a handful of men against multitudes, rushed upon allied Europe, and absurdly gained victories that were impossible? Whence came this thundering madman who, almost without taking his breath, and with the same set of the combatants in hand, pulverized one after the other the five armies of the Emperor of Germany, overthrowing Beaulieu upon Alvinzi, Wurmser upon Beaulieu, Melas upon Wurmser, Mack upon Melas? Who was this new-comer in war with the confidence of destiny? The academic military school excommunicated him as it ran away. Thence an implacable hatred of the old system of war against the new, of the correct sabre against the flashing sword, and of the checker-board against genius. On the 18th of June, 1815, this hatred had the last word, and under Lodi, Montebello, Montenotte, Mantua, Marengo, Arcola, it wrote: Waterloo. Triumph of the commonplace, grateful to majorities. Destiny consented to this irony. In his decline Napoleon again found Wurmser before him, but young. Indeed, to produce Wurmser it would have been enough to whiten Wellington's hair.

Waterloo is a battle of the first rank won by a captain of the second.

What is truly admirable in the battle of Waterloo is England, English firmness, English resolution, English blood; the superb thing which England had there—may it not displease her—is herself. It is not her captain, it is her army.

Wellington, strangely ungrateful, declared in a letter to Lord Bathurst that his army, the army that fought on the 18th of June, 1815, was a "detestable army." What does this dark assemblage of bones, buried beneath the furrows of Waterloo, think of that?

England has been too modest in regard to Wellington. To make Wellington so great is to belittle England. Well-

ington is but a hero like the rest. These Scotch Grays, these Horse Guards, these regiments of Maitland and of Mitchell, this infantry of Pack and Kempt, this cavalry of Ponsonby and of Somerset, these Highlanders playing the bagpipe under the storm of grape, these battalions of Rylandt, these raw recruits who hardly knew how to handle a musket, holding out against the veteran bands of Essling and Rivoli—all that is grand. Wellington was tenacious, that was his merit, and we do not undervalue it, but the least of his foot-soldiers or his horsemen was quite as firm as he. The iron soldier is as good as the Iron Duke. For our part all our glorification goes to the English soldier, the English army, the English people. If trophy there be, to England the trophy is due. The Waterloo column would be more just if, instead of the figure of a man, it lifted to the clouds the statue of a nation.

But this great England will be offended at what we say here. She has still, after her 1688 and our 1789, the feudal illusion. She believes in hereditary right and in the hierarchy. This people, surpassed by none in might and glory, esteems itself as a nation, not as a people. So much so that as a people they subordinate themselves willingly and take a lord for a head. Workmen, they submit to be despised; soldiers, they submit to be whipped. We remember that at the battle of Inkerman a sergeant, who, as it appeared, had saved the army, could not be mentioned by Lord Raglan, the English military hierarchy not permitting any hero below the rank of officer to be spoken of in a report.

What we admire, above all, in an encounter like that of Waterloo, is the prodigious skill of fortune. The night's rain, the wall of Hougomont, the sunken road of Ohain, Grouchy deaf to cannon, Napoleon's guide who deceives him; Bulow's guide who leads him right; all this cataclysm is wonderfully carried out.

Taken as a whole, let us say, Waterloo was more of a massacre than a battle.

Of all great battles, Waterloo is that which has the shortest line in proportion to the number engaged. Napoleon, two miles, Wellington, a mile and a half; 72,000 men on each side. From this density came the carnage.

The calculation has been made and this proportion estab-

lished: Loss of men—at Austerlitz, French, 14 per cent; Russians, 30 per cent; Austrians, 44 per cent. At Wagram, French, 13 per cent; Austrians, 14. At La Moscowa, French, 37 per cent; Russians, 44. At Bautzen, French, 13 per cent; Russians and Prussians, 14. At Waterloo, French, 56 per cent; Allies, 31. Average for Waterloo 44 per cent. A hundred and forty-four thousand men; 60,000 dead.

The field of Waterloo to-day has that calm which belongs to the earth, impassive support of man; it resembles any other plain.

At night, however, a sort of visionary mist arises from it, and if some traveler be walking there, if he looks, if he listens, if he dreams like Virgil in the fatal plain of Philippi, he becomes possessed by the hallucination of the disaster. The terrible 18th of June is again before him; the artificial hill of the monument fades away, this lion, whatever it be, is dispelled; the field of battle resumes its reality; the lines of infantry undulate in the plain, furious gallops traverse the horizon; the bewildered dreamer sees the flash of sabres, the glistening of bayonets, the bursting of shells, the awful intermingling of the thunders, he hears, like a death-rattle from the depths of a tomb, the vague clamor of the phantom battle; these shadows are grenadiers; these gleams are cuirassiers; this skeleton is Napoleon; that skeleton is Wellington; all this is unreal, and yet it clashes and combats; and the ravines run red and the trees shiver, and there is fury even in the clouds, and, in the darkness, all those savage heights, Mont St. Jean, Hougomont, Frischemont, Papelotte, Planchenoit, appear confusedly crowned with whirlwinds of spectres exterminating each other.

XVII

MUST WE APPROVE WATERLOO?

THERE exists a very respectable liberal school which does not hate Waterloo. We are not of them. To us Waterloo is but the unconscious date of liberty. That such an eagle should come from such an egg is certainly an unlooked-for thing.

Waterloo, if we place ourselves at the culminating point

of view of the question, is intentionally a counter-revolutionary victory. It is Europe against France; it is Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna against Paris; it is the status quo against the initiative; it is the 14th of June, 1789, attacked by the 20th of March, 1815; it is the monarchies clearing the decks for action against indomitable French uprising. The final extinction of this vast people, for twenty-six years in eruption, such was the dream. It was the solidarity of the Brunswicks, the Nassaus, the Romanoffs, the Hohenzollerns, and the Hapsburgs with the Bourbons. Divine right rides behind with Waterloo. It is true that the Empire, having been despotic, royalty, by the natural reaction of things, was forced to become liberal, and also that a constitutional order has indirectly sprung from Waterloo, to the great regret of the conquerors. The fact is, that revolution can not be conquered, and that being providential and absolutely decreed, it reappears continually: before Waterloo in Bonaparte, throwing down the old thrones, after Waterloo in Louis XVIII granting and submitting to the charter. Bonaparte places a postilion on the throne of Naples and a sergeant on the throne of Sweden, employing inequality to demonstrate equality; Louis XVIII, at Saint Ouens, countersigns the declaration of the rights of man. Would you realize what revolution is, call it progress; and would you realize what progress is, call it to-morrow. To-morrow performs its work irresistibly, and it performs it from to-day. It always reaches its aim through unexpected means. It employs Wellington to make Foy, who was only a soldier, an orator. Foy falls at Hougomont and rises again at the rostrum. Thus progress goes on. No tool comes amiss to this workman. It adjusts to its divine work, without being disconcerted, the man who strode over the Alps and the good old tottering invalid of the Père Elysée. It makes use of the cripple as well as the conqueror, the conqueror without, the cripple within. Waterloo, by cutting short the demolition of European thrones by the sword, has had no other effect than to continue the revolutionary work in another way. The sabrers have gone out, the time of the thinkers has come. The age which Waterloo would have checked has marched on and pursued its course. This inauspicious victory has been conquered by liberty.

In fine and incontestably, that which triumphed at Waterloo; that which smiled behind Wellington; that which brought him all the marshals' batons of Europe, among them, it is said, the baton of marshal of France; that which joyfully rolled barrows of earth full of bones to rear the mound of the lion; that which has written triumphantly on that pedestal this date: June 18, 1815; that which encouraged Blücher sabring the fugitives; that which, from the height on the plateau of Mont St. Jean, hung over France as over a prey, was counter-revolution. It was counter-revolution which murmured this infamous word—dismemberment. Arriving at Paris it had a near view of the crater; it felt that these ashes were burning its feet and took a second thought. It came back lisping of a charter.

Let us see in Waterloo only what there is in Waterloo. Of intentional liberty, nothing. The counter-revolution was involuntarily liberal, as, by a corresponding phenomenon, Napoleon was involuntarily revolutionary. On the 18th of June, 1815, Robespierre, on horseback, was thrown from the saddle.

XVIII

RECRUDESCENCE OF DIVINE RIGHT

END of the dictatorship. The whole European system fell.

The Empire sank into a darkness which resembled that of the expiring Roman world. It rose again from the depths, as in the time of the Barbarians. Only, the barbarism of 1815, which should be called by its special name, the counter-revolution, was short-winded, soon out of breath and soon stopped. The Empire, we must acknowledge, was wept over and wept over by heroic eyes. If there be glory in the sceptre-sword, the Empire had been glory itself. It had spread over the earth all the light which tyranny can give—a sombre light. Let us say further—an obscure light. Compared to the real day it is night. This disappearance of night had the effect of an eclipse.

Louis XVIII returned to Paris. The dancing in a ring

of the 8th of July effaced the enthusiasm of the 20th of March. The Corsican became the antithesis of the Bearnois. The flag of the dome of the Tuileries was white. The exile mounted the throne. The fir table of Hartwell took its place before the chair decorated with fleur-de-lis of Louis XIV. Men talked of Bouvines and Fontenoy as of yesterday, Austerlitz being out of date. The altar and the throne fraternized majestically. One of the most unquestionably safe forms of society in the nineteenth century was established in France and on the Continent. Europe put on the white cockade. Trestaillon became famous. The device *non pluribus impar* reappeared in the radiations on the façade of the barracks of the quay of Orsay. Where there had been an imperial guard there was a red house. The arc du Carrousel—covered with awkwardly gained victories—disowned by these new times, and a little ashamed, perhaps, of Marengo and Arcola, extricated itself from the affair by the statue of the Duke of Angoulême. The cemetery de la Madeleine, the terrible Potter's field of '93, was covered with marble and jasper, the bones of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette being in this dust. In the ditch of Vincennes a sepulchral column rose from the ground, recalling the fact that the Duke of Enghein died in the same month in which Napoleon was crowned. Pope Pius VII, who had performed this consecration very near the time of this death, tranquilly blessed the fall as he had blessed the elevation. At Schönbrunn there was a little shadow four years old which it was seditious to call the King of Rome. And these things were done and these kings resumed their thrones and the master of Europe was put in a cage and the old *régime* became the new, and all the light and shade of the earth changed place, because in the afternoon of a summer's day a cowboy said to a Prussian in a wood: "Pass this way and not that!"

This 1815 was a sort of gloomy April. The old unhealthy and poisonous realities took on new shapes. Falsehood espoused 1789, divine right masked itself under a charter, fictions became constitutional, prejudices, superstitions and mental reservations, with article 14 hugged to the heart, put on a varnish of liberalism. Serpents changing their skins.

Man had been at once made greater and made less by

Napoleon. The ideal, under this splendid material reign, had received the strange name of ideology. Serious recklessness of a great man to turn the future into derision. The people, however, that food for cannon so fond of the cannoneer, look for him. Where is he? What is he doing? "Napoleon is dead," said a visitor to an invalid of Marengo and Waterloo. "He is dead!" cried the soldier, "are you sure of that?" Imagination deified this prostrate man. The heart of Europe, after Waterloo, was gloomy. An enormous void remained long after the disappearance of Napoleon.

Kings threw themselves into this void. Old Europe profited by it to assume a new form. There was a holy alliance. La Belle Alliance, the fatal field of Waterloo, had already said in advance.

In presence of and confronting this ancient Europe made over, the lineaments of a new France began to appear. The future, the jest of the Emperor, made its appearance. It had on its brow this star, liberty. The ardent eyes of rising generations turned toward it. Strange to tell, men became enamored at the same time of this future, liberty, and of this past, Napoleon. Defeat had magnified the vanquished. Bonaparte fallen seemed higher than Bonaparte in power. Those who had triumphed were struck with fear. England guarded him through Hudson Lowe and France watched him through Montchenu. His folded arms became the anxiety of thrones. Alexander called him "My Wakefulness." This terror arose from the amount of revolution he had in him. This is the explanation and excuse of Bonapartist liberalism. This phantom made the old world quake. Kings reigned ill at ease with the rock of St. Helena in the horizon.

While Napoleon was dying at Longwood the 60,000 men fallen on the field of Waterloo tranquilly mouldered away, and something of their peace spread over the world. The Congress of Vienna made from it the treaties of 1815 and Europe called that the Restoration.

Such is Waterloo.

But what is that to the Infinite? All this tempest, all this cloud, this war, then this peace, all this darkness, disturb not for a moment the light of that infinite Eye, before which the least of insects leaping from one blade of

grass to another equals the eagle flying from spire to spire among the towers of Notre Dame.

XIX

THE FIELD OF BATTLE AT NIGHT

WE return, for it is a requirement of this book, to the fatal field of battle.

On the 18th of June, 1815, the moon was full. Its light favored the ferocious pursuit of Blücher, disclosed the traces of the fugitives, delivered this helpless mass to the bloodthirsty Prussian cavalry and aided in the massacre. Night sometimes lends such tragic assistance to catastrophe.

When the last gun had been fired the plain of Mont St. Jean remained deserted.

The English occupied the camp of the French; it is the usual verification of victory to sleep in the bed of the vanquished. They established their bivouac around Rossomme. The Prussians, let loose upon the fugitives, pushed forward. Wellington went to the village of Waterloo to make up his report to Lord Bathurst.

If ever the *sic vos non vobis* were applicable, it is surely to this village of Waterloo. Waterloo did nothing and was two miles distant from the action. Mont St. Jean was cannonaded, Hougomont was burned, Papelotte was burned, Planchenoit was burned, La Haie Sainte was taken by assault, La Belle Alliance witnessed the meeting of the two conquerors; these names are scarcely known, and Waterloo, which had nothing to do with the battle, has all the honor of it.

We are not of those who glorify war; when the opportunity presents itself we describe its realities. War has frightful beauties which we have not concealed; it has also, we must admit, some deformities. One of the most surprising is the eager spoliation of the dead after a victory. The day after a battle always dawns upon naked corpses.

Who does this? Who thus sullies the triumph? Whose is this hideous, furtive hand which glides into the pocket of victory? Who are these pickpockets following their trade in the wake of glory? Some philosophers, Voltaire among others, affirm that they are precisely those who have

achieved the glory. They are the same, say they, there is no exchange; those who survive pillage those who succumb. The hero of the day is the vampire of the night. A man has a right, after all, to despoil in part a corpse which he has made.

For our part we do not believe this. To gather laurels and to steal the shoes from a dead man seems to us impossible to the same hand.

One thing is certain, that, after the conquerors, come the robbers. But let us place the soldier, especially the soldier of to-day, beyond this charge.

Every army has a train, and there the accusation should lie. Bats, half brigand and half valet, all species of night bird engendered by this twilight which is called war, bearers of uniforms who never fight, sham invalids, formidable cripples, interloping sutlers, traveling, sometimes with their wives, on little carts and stealing what they sell, beggars offering themselves as guides to officers, army servants, marauders; armies on the march formerly—we do not speak of the present time—were followed by all these, to such an extent that, in technical language, they are called "camp-followers." No army and no nation was responsible for these beings; they spoke Italian and followed the Germans; they spoke French and followed the English. It was by one of those wretches, a Spanish camp-follower who spoke French, that the Marquis of Fervacques, deceived by his Picardy gibberish, and taking him for one of us, was treacherously killed and robbed on the very battlefield during the night which followed the victory of Cerisoles. From marauding came the marauder. The detestable maxim, "Live on your enemy," produced this leper, which rigid discipline alone can cure. There are reputations which are illusory; it is not always known why certain generals, though they have been great, have been so popular. Turenne was adored by his soldiers because he tolerated pillage; the permission to do wrong forms part of kindness; Turenne was so kind that he allowed the Palatinate to be burned and put to the sword. There were seen in the wake of armies more or less of marauders according as the commander was more or less severe. Hoche and Marceau had no camp-followers; Wellington—we gladly do him this justice—had few.

However, during the night of the 18th of June, the dead were despoiled. Wellington was rigid; he ordered whoever should be taken in the act to be put to death; but rapine is persevering. The marauders were robbing in one corner of the battlefield while they were shooting them in another.

The moon was an evil genius on this plain.

Toward midnight a man was prowling or rather crawling along the sunken road of Ohain. He was, to all appearances, one of those whom we have just described, neither English nor French, peasant nor soldier, less a man than a ghoul, attracted by the scent of the corpses, counting theft for victory, coming to rifle Waterloo. He was dressed in a blouse which was in part a capote, was restless and daring, looking behind and before as he went. Who was this man? Night, probably, knew more of his doings than day! He had no knapsack, but evidently large pockets under his capote. From time to time he stopped, examined the plain around him as if to see if he were observed, stooped down suddenly, stirred on the ground something silent and motionless, then rose up and skulked away. His gliding movements, his attitudes, his rapid and mysterious gestures, made him seem like those twilight spectres which haunt ruins and which the old Norman legends call the goers.

Certain nocturnal water-birds make such motions in marshes.

An eye which had carefully penetrated all this haze might have noticed at some distance, standing as it were concealed behind the ruin which is on the Nevilles road at the corner of the route from Mont St. Jean to Braine l'Alleud, a sort of little sutler's wagon, covered with tarred osiers, harnessed to a famished jade browsing nettles through her bit, and in the wagon a sort of woman, seated on some trunks and packages. Perhaps there was some connection between this wagon and the prowler.

The night was serene. Not a cloud was in the zenith. What mattered it that the earth was red, the moon retained her whiteness. Such is the indifference of heaven. In the meadows, branches of trees, broken by grape, but not fallen, and held by the bark, swung gently in the night wind. A breath, almost a respiration, moved the brush-

wood. There was a quivering in the grass which seemed like the departure of souls.

The tread of the patrols and roundsmen of the English camp could be heard dimly in the distance.

Hougomont and La Haie Sainte continued to burn, making, one in the east and the other in the west, two great flames, to which was attached, like a necklace of rubies with two carbuncles at its extremities, the cordon of bivouac fires of the English, extending in an immense semicircle over the hills of the horizon.

We have spoken of the catastrophe of the road of Ohain. The heart almost sinks with terror at the thought of such a death for so many brave men.

If anything is frightful, if there be a reality which surpasses dreams, it is this: to live, to see the sun, to be in full possession of manly vigor, to have health and joy, to laugh sturdily, to rush toward a glory which dazzlingly invites you on, to feel a very pleasure in respiration, to feel your heart beat, to feel yourself a reasoning being, to speak, to think, to hope, to love; to have mother, to have wife, to have children, to have sunlight, and suddenly, in a moment, in less than a minute, to feel yourself buried in an abyss, to fall, to roll, to crush, to be crushed, to see the grain, the flowers, the leaves, the branches, to be able to seize upon nothing, to feel your sword useless, men under you, horses over you, to strike about you in vain, your bones broken by some kick in the darkness, to feel a heel which makes your eyes leap from their sockets, to grind the horseshoes with rage in your teeth, to stifle, to howl, to twist, to be under all this, and to say: "Just now I was a living man!"

There, where this terrible death-rattle had been, all was now silent. The cut of the sunken road was filled with horses and riders inextricably heaped together. Terrible entanglement. There were no longer slopes to the road; dead bodies filled it even with the plain, and came to the edge of the banks like a well-measured bushel of barley. A mass of dead above, a river of blood below—such was this road on the evening of the 18th of June, 1815. The blood ran even to the Nivelles road, and oozed through in a large pool in front of the abatis of trees, which barred that road, at a spot which is still shown. It was, it will

be remembered, at the opposite point, toward the road from Genappe, that the burying of the cuirassiers took place. The thickness of the mass of bodies was proportioned to the depth of the hollow road. Toward the middle, at a spot where it became shallower, over which Delord's division had passed, this bed of death became thinner.

The night prowler which we have just introduced to the reader went in this direction. He ferreted through this immense grave. He looked about. He passed an indescribably hideous review of the dead. He walked with his feet in blood.

Suddenly he stopped.

A few steps before him, in the sunken road, at a point where the mound of corpses ended, from under this mass of men and horses appeared an open hand, lighted by the moon.

This hand had something upon a finger which sparkled; it was a gold ring.

The man stooped down, remained a moment, and when he rose again there was no ring upon that hand.

He did not rise up precisely; he remained in a sinister and startled attitude, turning his back to the pile of dead, scrutinizing the horizon, on his knees, all the front of his body being supported on his two forefingers, his head raised just enough to peep above the edge of the hollow road. The four paws of the jackal are adapted to certain actions.

Then, deciding upon his course, he arose.

At this moment he experienced a shock. He felt that he was held from behind.

He turned; it was the open hand which had closed, seizing the lapel of his capote.

An honest man would have been frightened. This man began to laugh.

"Oh," said he: "it's only the dead man. I like a ghost better than a gendarme."

However, the hand relaxed and let go its hold. Strength is soon exhausted in the tomb.

"Ah, ha!" returned the prowler: "is this dead man alive? Let us see."

He bent over again, rummaged among the heap, removed whatever impeded him, seized the hand, laid hold

of the arm, disengaged the head, drew out the body, and some moments after dragged into the shadow of the hollow road an inanimate man, at least one who was senseless. It was a cuirassier, an officer—an officer also of some rank; a great gold epaulet protruded from beneath his cuirass, but he had no casque. A furious sabre cut had disfigured his face, where nothing but blood was to be seen. It did not seem, however, that he had any limbs broken, and by some happy chance, if the word is possible here, the bodies were arched above him in such a way as to prevent his being crushed. His eyes were closed.

He had on his cuirass the silver cross of the Legion of Honor.

The prowler tore off this cross, which disappeared in one of the gulfs which he had under his capote.

After which he felt the officer's fob, found a watch there, and took it. Then he rummaged in his vest and found a purse, which he pocketed.

When he had reached this phase of the succor he was lending the dying man, the officer opened his eyes.

"Thanks," said he feebly.

The rough movements of the man handling him, the coolness of the night, and breathing the fresh air freely, had roused him from his lethargy.

The prowler answered not. He raised his head. The sound of a footstep could be heard on the plain, probably it was some patrol who was approaching.

The officer murmured, for there were still signs of suffering in his voice: "Who has gained the battle?"

"The English," answered the prowler.

The officer replied: "Search my pockets. You will there find a purse and a watch. Take them."

This had already been done.

The prowler made a pretence of executing the command, and said: "There is nothing there."

"I have been robbed," replied the officer. "I am sorry. They would have been yours."

The step of the patrol became more and more distinct.

"Somebody is coming," said the prowler, making a movement as if he would go.

The officer, raising himself up painfully upon one arm, held him back.

"You have saved my life. Who are you?"

The prowler answered quick and low: "I belong, like yourself, to the French army. I must go. If I am taken I shall be shot. I have saved your life. Help yourself now."

"What is your grade?"

"Sergeant."

"What is your name?"

"Thenardier."

"I shall not forget that name," said the officer. "And you remember mine. My name is Pontmercy."

BOOK SECOND—THE SHIP *ORION*

I

NUMBER 24601 BECOMES NUMBER 9430

JEAN VALJEAN had been retaken.

We shall be pardoned for passing rapidly over the painful details. We shall merely reproduce a couple of items published in the newspapers of that day, some few months after the remarkable events that occurred at M—— sur M——.

The articles referred to are somewhat laconic. It will be remembered that the "Gazette des Tribunaux" had not yet been established.

We copy the first fom the "Drapeau Blanc." It is dated the 25th of July, 1823:

A district of the Pas-de-Calais has just been the scene of an extraordinary occurrence. A stranger in that department, known as M. Madeleine, had, within a few years past, restored, by means of certain new processes, the manufacture of jet and black glass ware—a former local branch of industry. He had made his own fortune by it, and, in fact, that of the entire district. In acknowledgment of his services he had been appointed mayor. The police have discovered that M. Madeleine was none other than an escaped convict, condemned in 1796 for robbery, and named Jean Valjean. This Jean Valjean has been sent back to the galleys. It appears that previous to his arrest he succeeded in withdrawing from Laffitte's a sum amounting to more than 500,000 francs, which he had deposited there, and which, it is said, by the way, he had very legitimately realized in his business. Since his return to the galleys at Toulon it has been impossible to discover where Jean Valjean concealed his money.

The second article, which enters a little more into detail, is taken from the "Journal de Paris" of the same date:

An old convict, named Jean Valjean, has recently been brought before the Var assizes under circumstances calculated to attract attention. This villain had succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the police; he had changed his name, and had even been adroit enough to procure the appointment of mayor in one of our small towns in the north. He had established in this town a very considerable business, but was at length unmasked and arrested, thanks to the indefatigable zeal of the public authorities. He kept, as his mistress, a prostitute, who died of the shock at the moment of his arrest. This wretch, who is endowed with Hurculean strength, managed to escape; but, three or four days afterward the police retook him in Paris, just as he was getting into one of the small vehicles that ply between the capital and the village of Montfermeil (Seine-et-Oise). It is said that he had availed himself of the interval of these three or four days of freedom to withdraw a considerable sum deposited by him with one of our principal bankers. The amount is estimated at 600,000 or 700,000 francs. According to the minutes of the case, he has concealed it in some place known to himself alone, and it has been impossible to seize it; however that may be, the said Jean Valjean has been brought before the assizes of the Department of the Var, under indictment for an assault and robbery on the high road, committed *vi et armis,* some eight years ago, on the person of one of those honest lads who, as the patriarch of Ferney has written in immortal verse:

" . ... De Savoie arrivent tous les ans,
Et dont la main légèrement essuie
Ces longs canaux engorgés par la suie." *

This bandit attempted no defence. It was proved by the able and eloquent representative of the crown that the robbery was shared in by others, and that Jean Valjean formed one of a band of robbers in the south. Consequently, Jean Valjean, being found guilty, was condemned to death. The criminal refused to appeal to the higher courts, and the King, in his inexhaustible clemency, deigned to commute his sentence to that of hard labor in prison for life. Jean Valjean was immediately forwarded to the galleys at Toulon.

It will not be forgotten that Jean Valjean had at M—— sur M—— certain religious habits. Some of the newspapers, and among them the "Constitutionnel," held up this commutation as a triumph of the clerical party.

---

* " . . . Who come from Savoy every year,
And whose hands deftly wipe out
Those long channels choked up with soot."

Jean Valjean changed his number at the galleys. He became No. 9430.

While we are about it let us remark, in dismissing the subject, that, with M. Madeleine, the prosperity of M—— sur M—— disappeared; all that he had foreseen, in that night of fever and irresolution, was realized; he gone, the *soul* was gone. After his downfall, there was, at M—— sur M——, that egotistic distribution of what is left when great men have fallen—that fatal carving up of prosperous enterprises which is daily going on, out of sight in human society, and which history has noted but once, and then because it took place after the death of Alexander. Generals crown themselves kings; the foremen, in this case, assumed the position of manufacturers. Jealous rivalries arose. The spacious workshops of M. Madeleine were closed; the buildings fell into ruin, the workmen dispersed. Some left the country, others abandoned the business. From that time forth everything was done on a small instead of on a large scale, and for gain rather than for good. No longer any centre; competition on all sides and on all sides venom. M. Madeleine had ruled and directed everything. He fallen, every man strove for himself; the spirit of strife succeeded to the spirit of organization, bitterness to cordiality, hatred of each against each instead of the good-will of the founder toward all; the threads knitted by M. Madeleine became entangled and were broken; the workmanship was debased, the manufacturers were degraded, confidence was killed; customers diminished, there were fewer orders; wages decreased, the shops became idle, bankruptcy followed. And then there was nothing left for the poor. All that was there disappeared.

Even the state noticed that some one had been crushed in some direction. Less than four years after the decree of the court of assizes establishing the identity of M. Madeleine and Jean Valjean for the benefit of the galleys, the expense of collecting the taxes was doubled in the district of M—— sur M——; and M. de Villèle remarked the fact on the floor of the Assembly in the month of February, 1827.

II

IN WHICH A COUPLE OF LINES WILL BE READ WHICH CAME, PERHAPS, FROM THE EVIL ONE

BEFORE proceeding further it will not be amiss to relate in some detail a singular incident which took place about the same time at Montfermeil, and which, perhaps, does not fall in badly with certain conjectures of the public authorities.

There exists in the neighborhood of Montfermeil a very ancient superstition, all the more rare and precious from the fact that a popular superstition in the vicinity of Paris is like an aloe-tree in Siberia. Now, we are of those who respect anything in the way of a rarity. Here, then, is the superstition of Montfermeil: They believe there that the evil one has from time immemorial chosen the forest as the hiding-place for his treasure. The good wives of the vicinity affirm that it is no unusual thing to meet at sundown in the secluded portions of the woods a black-looking man, resembling a wagoner or wood-cutter, shod in wooden shoes, clad in breeches and sack of coarse linen, and recognizable from the circumstance that instead of a cap or hat he has two immense horns upon his head. That certainly ought to render him recognizable. This man is constantly occupied in digging holes. There are three ways of dealing when you meet him.

The first mode is to approach the man and speak to him. Then you perceive that the man is nothing but a peasant, that he looks black because it is twilight, that he is digging no hole whatever, but is merely cutting grass for his cows; and that what had been taken for horns are nothing but his pitchfork which he carries on his back and the prongs of which, thanks to the night perspective, seemed to rise from his head. You go home and die within the week. The second method is to watch him, to wait until he has dug the hole, closed it up and gone away; then to run quickly to the spot, to open it and get the "treasure" which the black-looking man has of course buried there. In this case you die within the month. The third manner is not to speak to the dark man nor even to look at him and to run away as fast as you can. You die within the year.

As all three of these methods have their drawbacks, the second, which at least offers some advantages—among others that of possessing a treasure, though it be but for a month—is the one generally adopted. Daring fellows who never neglect a good chance have therefore many times, it is asseverated, reopened the holes thus dug by the black-looking man and tried to rob the devil. It would appear, however, that it is not a very good business—at least, if we are to believe tradition, and, more especially, two enigmatic lines in barbarous Latin left us on this subject by a roguish Norman monk named Tryphon who dabbled in the black art. This Tryphon was buried in the abbey of St. Georges de Bocherville, near Rouen, and toads are produced from his grave.

Well, then, the treasure-seeker makes tremendous efforts, for the holes referred to are dug generally very deep; he sweats, he digs, he works away all night—for this is done in the night time; he gets his clothes wet, he consumes his candle, he hacks and breaks his pickaxe, and when at length he has reached the bottom of the hole—when he has put his hand upon the "treasure"—what does he find? What is this treasure of the evil one? A penny—sometimes a crown; a stone, a skeleton, a bleeding corpse, sometimes a spectre twice folded like a sheet of paper in a portfolio, sometimes nothing. This is what seems to be held forth to the indiscreet and prying by the lines of Tryphon:

> "Fodit et in fossa thesauros condit opaca,
> As, nummos, lapides, cadaver, simulacra, nihilque."

It appears that in our time they find in addition sometimes a powder-horn with bullets, sometimes an old pack of brown and greasy cards which have evidently been used by the devil. Tryphon makes no mention of these articles, as Tryphon lived in the twelfth century, and it does not appear that the evil one had wit enough to invent powder in advance of Roger Bacon or cards before Charles VI.

Moreover, whoever plays with these cards is sure to lose all he has, and as to the powder in the flask, it has the peculiarity of bursting your gun in your face.

Now, very shortly after the time when the authorities took it into their heads that the liberated convict, Jean

Valjean, had during his escape of a few days' duration been prowling about Montfermeil, it was remarked in that village that a certain old road laborer named Boulatruelle had "a fancy" for the woods. People in the neighborhood claimed to know that Boulatruelle had been in the galleys; he was under police surveillance, and as he could find no work anywhere the Government employed him at half-wages as a mender on the cross-road from Gagny to Lagny.

This Boulatruelle was a man in bad odor with the people of the neighborhood; he was too respectful, too humble, prompt to doff his cap to everybody; he always trembled and smiled in the presence of the gendarmes, was probably in secret connection with robber bands, said the gossips, and suspected of lying in wait in the hedge corners at nightfall. He had nothing in his favor except that he was a drunkard.

What had been observed was this: For some time past Boulatruelle had left off his work at stone breaking and keeping the road in order very early and had gone into the woods with his pick. He would be met toward evening in the remotest glades and the wildest thickets, having the appearance of a person looking for something, and sometimes digging holes. The good wives who passed that way took him at first for Beelzebub, then they recognized Boulatruelle and were by no means reassured. These chance meetings seemed greatly to disconcert Boulatruelle. It was clear that he was trying to conceal himself, and that there was something mysterious in his operations.

The village gossips said: "It's plain that the devil has been about; Boulatruelle has seen him and is looking for his treasure. The truth is, he is just the fellow to rob the evil one." The Voltairians added: "Will Boulatruelle catch the devil or the devil catch Boulatruelle?" The old women crossed themselves very often.

However, the visits of Boulatruelle to the woods ceased, and he recommenced his regular labor on the road. People began to talk about something else.

A few, however, retained their curiosity, thinking that there might be involved in the affair, not the fabulous treasure of the legend, but some goodly matter more substantial than the devil's bank-bills, and that Boulatruelle

had half spied out the secret. The worst puzzled of all were the schoolmaster and the tavern-keeper, Thenardier, who was everybody's friend, and who had not disdained to strike up an intimacy with even Boulatruelle.

"He has been in the galleys," said Thenardier. "Good Lord! nobody knows who is there or who may be there!"

One evening the schoolmaster remarked that in old times the authorities would have inquired into what Boulatruelle was about in the woods, and that he would have been compelled to speak—even put to torture if needs were—and that Boulatruelle would not have held out had he been put to the question by water, for example.

"Let us put him to the wine question," said Thenardier.

So they made up a party and plied the old roadsman with drink. Boulatruelle drank enormously, but said little. He combined with admirable art and in masterly proportions the thirst of a guzzler with the discretion of a judge. However, by dint of returning to the charge and by putting together and twisting the obscure expressions that he did let fall, Thenardier and the schoolmaster made out, as they thought, the following:

One morning, about daybreak, as he was going to his work, Boulatruelle had been surprised at seeing under a bush at the corner of the wood, a pickaxe and spade, as one would say, *hidden there.* However, he supposed that they were the pick and spade of old Six-Fours, the water-carrier, and thought no more about it. But on the evening of the same day he had seen, without being seen himself—for he was hidden behind a large tree—"a person who did not belong at all to that region, and whom he [Boulatruelle] knew very well"—or, as Thenardier translated it, "an old comrade at the galleys"—turn off from the highroad toward the thickest part of the wood. Boulatruelle obstinately refused to tell the stranger's name. This person carried a package, something square, like a large box or a small trunk. Boulatruelle was surprised. Seven or eight minutes, however, elapsed before it occurred to him to follow the "person." But he was too late. The person was already in the thick woods, night had come on, and Boulatruelle did not succeed in overtaking him. Thereupon he made up his mind to watch the outskirts of the wood. "There was a moon." Two or three hours later, Boula-

truelle saw this person come forth again from the wood, this time carrying not the little trunk but a pick and a spade. Boulatruelle let the person pass unmolested, because, as he thought to himself, the other was three times as strong as he, was armed with a pickaxe, and would probably murder him, on recognizing his countenance and seeing that he, in turn, was recognized. Touching display of feeling in two old companions unexpectedly meeting! But the pick and the spade were a ray of light to Boulatruelle; he hastened to the bushes in the morning, and found neither one nor the other. He thence concluded that this person, on entering the wood, had dug a hole with his pick, had buried the chest, and had then filled up the hole with his spade. Now, as the chest was too small to contain a corpse, it must contain money; hence his continued searches. Boulatruelle had explored, sounded, and ransacked the whole forest, and had rummaged every spot where the earth seemed to have been freshly disturbed. But all in vain.

He had turned up nothing. Nobody thought any more about it at Montfermeil, excepting a few good gossips, who said: "Be sure the road-laborer of Gagny didn't make all that fuss for nothing; the devil was certainly there."

III

SHOWING THAT THE CHAIN OF THE IRON RING MUST NEEDS HAVE UNDERGONE A CERTAIN PREPARATION TO BE THUS BROKEN BY ONE BLOW OF THE HAMMER

TOWARD the end of October, in that same year, 1823, the inhabitants of Toulon saw coming back into their port, in consequence of heavy weather, and in order to repair some damages, the ship *Orion,* which was at a later period employed at Brest as a vessel of instruction, and which then formed a part of the Mediterranean squadron. This ship, cripple as she was, for the sea had used her roughly, produced some sensation on entering the roadstead. She flew, I forget what pennant, but it entitled her to a regular salute of eleven guns, which she returned shot for shot, in all twenty-two. It has been estimated that in salutes, royal and military compliments, exchanges of cour-

teous hubbub, signals of etiquette, roadstead and citadel formalities, rising and setting of the sun saluted daily by all fortresses and all vessels of war, the opening and closing of gates, etc., the civilized world, in every part of the globe, fires off daily 150,000 useless cannon-shots. At six francs per shot, that would amount to 900,000 francs per day, or 300,000,000 per year blown off in smoke. This is only an item. In the meanwhile, the poor are dying with hunger.

The year 1823 was what the Restoration has called the "time of the Spanish war."

That war comprised many events in one, and no small number of singular things. It was a great family affair of the Bourbons; the French branch aiding and protecting the branch at Madrid, that is to say, performing the duties of seniority; an apparent return to our national traditions, mixed up with subserviency and cringing to the cabinets of the north; the Duc d'Angoulême, dubbed by the liberal journals the hero of Andujar, repressing, with a triumphal attitude—rather contradicted by his peaceful mien—the old and very real terrorism of the holy office, in conflict with the chimerical terrorism of the liberals; sans-culottes revived, to the great alarm of all the old dowagers, under the name of descamisados; monarchists striving to impede progress, which they styled anarchy; the theories of '89 rudely interrupted in their undermining advances; a halt from all Europe, intimated to the French idea of revolution, making its tour of the globe; side by side with the son of France, general-in-chief, the Prince de Carignan, afterward Charles Albert, enlisting in this crusade of the kings against the people as a volunteer, with a grenadier's epaulets of red wool; the soldiers of the empire again betaking themselves to the field, but after eight years of rest, grown old, gloomy, and under the white cockade; the tricolor displayed abroad by a heroic handful of Frenchmen, as the white flag had been at Coblentz, thirty years before; monks mingling with our troopers; the spirit of liberty and of innovation reduced by bayonets; principles struck dumb by cannon-shot; France undoing by her arms what she had done with her mind; to cap the climax, the leaders on the other side sold; their troops irresolute; cities besieged by millions of money; no military dangers, and yet some explosions possible, as is the case in every mine en-

tered and taken by surprise; but little blood shed, but little honor gained; shame for a few, glory for none. Such was this war, brought about by princes who descended from Louis XIV, and carried on by generals who sprang from Napoleon. It had this wretched fate, that it recalled neither the image of a great war nor of a great policy.

A few feats of arms were serious affairs; the taking of Trocadero, among others, was a handsome military exploit; but, taken all in all, we repeat, the trumpets of this war emitted a cracked and feeble sound, the general appearance of it was suspicious, and history approves the unwillingness of France to father so false a triumph. It seemed clear that certain Spanish officers, intrusted with the duty of resistance, yielded too easily; the idea of bribery was suggested by a contemplation of the victory; it appeared as if the generals, rather than the battles, had been won, and the victorious soldier returned humiliated. It was war grown petty, indeed, where you could read Bank of France on the folds of the flag.

Soldiers of the war of 1808, under whose feet Saragossa had so terribly crumbled, knit their brows at this ready surrender of fastnesses and citadels, and regretted Palafox. It is the mood of France to prefer to have before her a Rostopchine rather than a Ballesteros.

In a still graver point of view, which it is well to urge, too, this war, which broke the military spirit of France, fired the democratic spirit with indignation. It was a scheme of subjugation. In this campaign, the object held out to the French soldier, son of democracy, was the conquest of a yoke for the neck of another. Hideous contradiction. France exists to arouse the soul of the peoples, not to stifle it. Since 1792, all the revolutions of Europe have been but the French Revolution; liberty radiates on every side from France. That is a fact as clear as noonday. Blind is he who does not see it! Bonaparte has said it.

The war of 1823, an outrage on the generous Spanish nation, was, at the same time, an outrage on the French Revolution. This monstrous deed of violence France committed, but by compulsion; for, aside from wars of liberation, all that armies do they do by compulsion. The words

passive obedience tell the tale. An army is a wondrous masterpiece of combination, in which might is the result of an enormous sum-total of utter weakness. Thus only can we explain a war waged by humanity against humanity, in despite of humanity.

As to the Bourbons, the war of 1823 was fatal to them. They took it for a success. They did not see what danger there is in attempting to kill an idea by a military watchword. In their simplicity, they blundered to the extent of introducing into their establishment, as an element of strength, the immense enfeeblement of a crime. The spirit of the ambuscade and lying in wait entered into their policy. The germ of 1830 was in 1823. The Spanish campaign became in their councils an argument on behalf of violent measures and intrigues in favor of divine right. France having restored *el rey neto* in Spain, could certainly restore the absolute monarchy at home. They fell into the tremendous error of mistaking the obedience of the soldier for the acquiescence of the nation. That fond delusion ruins thrones. It will not do to fall asleep either in the shade of a upas tree or in the shadow of an army.

But let us return to the ship *Orion*.

During the operations of the army of the prince, commanding in chief, a squadron cruised in the Mediterranean. We have said that the *Orion* belonged to that squadron, and that she had been driven back by stress of weather to the port of Toulon.

The presence of a vessel of war in port has about it a certain influence which attracts and engages the multitude. It is because it is something grand, and the multitude like what is imposing.

A ship of the line is one of the most magnificent struggles of human genius with the forces of nature.

A vessel of the line is composed of the heaviest, and at the same time the lightest, materials, because she has to contend, at one and the same time, with the three forms of matter: the solid, the liquid, and the fluid. She has eleven claws of iron to grasp the rock at the bottom of the sea, and more wings and feelers than the butterfly to catch the breezes in the clouds. Her breath goes forth through her 120 guns as though enormous trumpets, and haughtily an-

swers the thunderbolt. Ocean strives to lead her astray in the frightful sameness of his billows, but the ship has her compass, which is her soul, always counseling her and always pointing toward the north. In dark nights her lanterns take the place of the stars. Thus, then, to oppose the wind, she has her ropes and canvas; against the water her timber; against the rock her iron, her copper, and her lead; against the darkness, light; against immensity, needle.

Whoever would form an idea of all these gigantic proportions, the aggregate of which constitutes a ship of the line, has but to pass under one of the covered ship-houses, six stories high, at Brest or Toulon. The vessels in process of construction are seen there under glass cases, so to speak. The colossal beam is a yard; that huge column of timber lying on the ground and reaching out of sight is the mainmast. Taking it from its root in the hold to its summit in the clouds, it is sixty fathoms long, and is three feet in diameter at its base. The English mainmast rises 217 feet above the water-line. The navy of our fathers used cables, ours uses chains. Now the mere coil of chains of a 100-gun ship is four feet high, twenty feet broad, and eight feet thick. And for the construction of this vessel, how much timber is required? It is a floating forest.

And yet, be it remembered, that we are here speaking only of the war vessels of some forty years ago, the mere sailing craft; steam, then in its infancy, has, since that time, added new wonders to this prodigy called a man-of-war. At the present day, for example, the mixed vessel, the screw-propeller, is a surprising piece of mechanism moved by a spread of canvas measuring 4,000 square yards of surface, and a steam-engine of 2,500 horsepower.

Without referring to these fresher marvels, the old-fashioned ship of Christopher Columbus and of De Ruyter is one of the noblest works of man. It is exhaustless in force as the breath of infinitude; it gathers up the wind in its canvas. It is firmly fixed in the immense chaos of the waves, it floats and it reigns.

But a moment comes when the white squall breaks that sixty-foot yard like a straw; and when the wind-flaw bends that 400-foot mast like a reed; when the anchor, weigh-

ing its tons upon tons, is twisted in the maw of the wave like the angler's hook in the jaw of a pike; when those monster guns utter plaintive and futile roarings which the tempest whirls away into space and night, when all this might and all this majesty are engulfed in a superior might and majesty.

Whenever immense strength is put forth only to end in immense weakness it makes men meditate. Hence it is that, in seaports, the curious, without themselves knowing exactly why, throng about these wonderful instruments of war and navigation.

Every day, then, from morning till night the quays, the wharves, and the piers of the port of Toulon were covered with a throng of saunterers and idlers, whose occupation consisted in gazing at the *Orion*.

The *Orion* was a ship that had long been in bad condition. During her previous voyages, thick layers of shellfish had gathered on her bottom to such an extent as to seriously impede her progress; she had been put on the dry-dock the year before to be scraped, and then she had gone to sea again. But this scraping had injured her fastening.

In the latitude of the Belearic Isles her planking had loosened and opened, and, as there was in those days no copper sheathing, the ship had leaked. A fierce equinoctial came on, which had stove in the larboard bows and a port-hole, and damaged the fore-chain-wales. In consequence of these injuries the *Orion* had put back to Toulon.

She was moored near the arsenal. She was in commission, and they were repairing her. The hull had not been injured on the starboard side, but a few planks had been taken off here and there, according to custom, to admit the air to the framework.

One morning the throng which was gazing at her witnessed an accident.

The crew were engaged in furling sail. The topman, whose duty it was to take in the starboard upper corner of the maintopsail, lost his balance. He was seen tottering: the dense throng assembled on the wharf of the arsenal uttered a cry, the man's head overbalanced his body, and he whirled over the yard, his arms outstretched toward the deep; as he went over he grasped the man-ropes, first with

one hand and then with the other, and hung suspended in that manner. The sea lay far below him at a giddy depth. The shock of his fall had given to the man-ropes a violent swinging motion, and the poor fellow hung dangling to and fro at the end of this line like a stone in a sling.

To go to his aid was to run a frightful risk. None of the crew, who were all fishermen of the coast recently taken into service, dared attempt it. In the meantime, the poor topman was becoming exhausted; his agony could not be seen in his countenance, but his increasing weakness could be detected in the movements of all his limbs. His arms twisted about in horrible contortions. Every attempt he made to reascend only increased the oscillations of the man-ropes. He did not cry out, for fear of losing his strength. All were now looking forward to the moment when he should let go of the rope, and, at instants, all turned their heads away that they might not see him fall. There are moments when a rope's end, a pole, the branch of a tree, is life itself, and it is a frightful thing to see a living being lose his hold upon it and fall like a ripe fruit.

Suddenly a man was discovered clambering up the rigging with the agility of a wildcat. This man was clad in red—it was a convict; he wore a green cap—it was a convict for life. As he reached the round top a gust of wind blew off his cap, and revealed a head entirely white; it was not a young man.

In fact, one of the convicts employed on board in some prison task had, at the first alarm, run to the officer of the watch, and, amid the confusion and hesitation of the crew, while all the sailors trembled and shrank back, had asked permission to save the topman's life at the risk of his own. A sign of assent being given, with one blow of a hammer he broke the chain riveted to the iron ring at his ankle, then took a rope in his hand and flung himself into the shrouds. Nobody, at the moment, noticed with what ease the chain was broken. It was only some time afterward that anybody remembered it.

In a twinkling he was upon the yard. He paused a few moments, and seemed to measure it with his glance. Those seconds, during which the wind swayed the sailor to and fro at the end of the rope, seemed ages to the

lookers-on. At length, the convict raised his eyes to heaven, and took a step forward. The crowd drew a long breath. He was seen to run along the yard. On reaching its extreme tip, he fastened one end of the rope he had with him, and let the other hang at full length. Thereupon, he began to let himself down by his hands along this rope, and then there was an inexpressible sensation of terror; instead of one man, two were seen dangling at that giddy height.

You would have said it was a spider seizing a fly; only, in this case, the spider was bringing life and not death. Ten thousand eyes were fixed upon the group. Not a cry, not a word was uttered; the same emotion contracted every brow. Every man held his breath, as if afraid to add the least whisper to the wind which was swaying the two unfortunate men.

However, the convict had, at length, managed to make his way down to the seaman. It was time; one minute more and the man, exhausted and despairing, would have fallen into the deep. The convict firmly secured him to the rope to which he clung with one hand while he worked with the other. Finally he was seen reascending to the yard, and hauling the sailor after him; he supported him there, for an instant, to let him recover his strength, and then, lifting him in his arms, carried him, as he walked along the yard, to the cross-trees, and from there to the round-top, when he left him in the hands of his messmates.

Then the throng applauded; old galley sergeants wept, women hugged each other on the wharves, and, on all sides, voices were heard exclaiming, with a sort of tenderly subdued enthusiasm: "This man must be pardoned!"

He, however, had made it a point of duty to descend again immediately and go back to his work. In order to arrive more quickly, he slid down the rigging and started to run along a lower yard. All eyes were following him. There was a certain moment when every one felt alarmed; whether it was that he felt fatigued, or because his head swam, people thought they saw him hesitate and stagger. Suddenly the throng uttered a thrilling outcry; the convict had fallen into the sea.

The fall was perilous. The frigate *Algesiras* was moored close to the *Orion,* and the poor convict had

plunged between the two ships. It was feared that he would be drawn under one or the other. Four men sprang, at once, into a boat. The people cheered them on, and anxiety again took possession of all minds. The man had not again risen to the surface. He had disappeared in the sea, without making even a ripple, as though he had fallen into a cask of oil. They sounded and dragged the place. It was in vain. The search was continued until night, but not even the body was found.

The next morning the "Toulon Journal" published the following lines:

Nov. 17, 1823.

Yesterday a convict at work on board of the *Orion*, on his return from rescuing a sailor, fell into the sea and was drowned. His body was not recovered. It is presumed that it has been caught under the piles at the pier-head of the arsenal. This man was registered by the number 9430 and his name was Jean Valjean.

BOOK THIRD—FULFILMENT OF THE PROMISE TO THE DEPARTED

I

THE WATER QUESTION AT MONTFERMEIL

MONTFERMEIL is situated between Livry and Chelles, upon the southern slope of the high plateau which separates the Ourcq from the Marne. At present it is a considerable town, adorned all the year round with stuccoed villas, and, on Sundays, with citizens in full blossom. In 1823, there were at Montfermeil neither so many white houses nor so many comfortable citizens; it was nothing but a village in the woods. You would find, indeed, here and there, a few country seats of the last century, recognizable by their grand appearance, their balconies of twisted iron, and those long windows the little panes of which show all sorts of different greens upon the white of the closed shutters. But Montfermeil was none the less a village. Retired dry-goods merchants and amateur villagers had not yet discovered it. It was a peaceful and charming spot, and not upon the road to any place; the inhabitants cheaply enjoyed that rural life which is so

luxuriant and so easy of enjoyment. But water was scarce there on account of the height of the plateau.

They had to go a considerable distance for it. The end of the village toward Gagny drew its water from the magnificent ponds in the forest on that side; the other end, which surrounds the church and which is toward Chelles, found drinking-water only at a little spring on the side of the hill, near the road to Chelles, about fifteen minutes' walk from Montfermeil.

It was, therefore, a serious matter for each household to obtain its supply of water. The great houses, the aristocracy, the Thenardier tavern included, paid a penny a bucketful to an old man who made it his business, and whose income from the Montfermeil water-works was about 8 sous per day; but this man worked only till 7 o'clock in summer and 5 in the winter, and, when night had come on and the first-floor shutters were closed, whoever had no drinking-water went after it or went without it.

This was the terror of the poor being whom the reader has not, perhaps, forgotten—little Cosette. It will be remembered that Cosette was useful to the Thenardiers in two ways, they got pay from the mother and work from the child. Thus when the mother ceased entirely to pay, we have seen why, in the preceding chapters, the Thenardiers kept Cosette. She saved them a servant. In that capacity she ran for water when it was wanted. So the child, always horrified at the idea of going to the spring at night, took good care that water should never be wanting at the house.

Christmas in the year 1823 was particularly brilliant at Montfermeil. The early part of the winter had been mild; so far there had been neither frost nor snow. Some jugglers from Paris had obtained permission from the Mayor to set up their stalls in the main street of the village, and a company of pedlers had, under the same license, put up their booths in the square before the church, and even in the Lane du Boulanger, upon which, as the reader perhaps remembers, the Thenardier chop-house was situated. This filled up the taverns and pot-houses, and gave to this little quiet place a noisy and joyous appearance. We ought also to say, to be a faithful historian, that, among the curiosities displayed in the square, there was a

menagerie in which frightful clowns, clad in rags and come nobody knows whence, were exhibiting, in 1823, to the peasants of Montfermeil one of those horrid Brazilian vultures, a specimen of which our Museum Royal did not obtain until 1845, and the eye of which is a tri-colored cockade. Naturalists call this bird, I believe, Caracara Polyborus; it belongs to the order of the Apicidæ, and the family of vultures. Some good, old retired Bonapartist soldiers in the village went to see the bird as a matter of faith. The jugglers pronounced the tri-colored cockade a unique phenomenon made expressly by God for their menagerie.

On that Christmas evening, several men, wagoners and pedlers, were seated at table and drinking around four or five candles in the low hall of the Thenardier tavern. This room resembled all bar-rooms; tables, pewter mugs, bottles, drinkers, smokers, little light, and much noise. The date, 1823, was, however, indicated by two things then in vogue with the middle classes, which were on the table, a kaleidoscope and a fluted tin lamp. Thenardier, the wife, was looking to the supper, which was cooking before a bright, blazing fire; the husband, Thenardier, was drinking with his guests and talking politics.

Aside from the political discussions, the principal subjects of which were the Spanish war and the Duc d'Angoulême, local interludes were heard amid the hubbub, like these, for instance:

"Down around Nanterre and Suresnes wine is turning out well. Where they expected ten casks they are getting twelve. That is getting a good yield of juice out of the press." "But the grapes can't be ripe." "Oh, in these parts there is no need of harvesting ripe; the wine is fat enough by spring." "It is all light wine, then?" "There is a good deal lighter wines than they make hereabouts. You have to harvest green," etc.

Or, indeed, a miller might be bawling: "Are we responsible for what there is in the bags? We find a heap of little seeds there, that we can't amuse ourselves by picking out, and, of course, we have got to let 'em go through the stones; there's darnel, there's fennel, there's cockles, there's vetch, there's hemp, there's fox-tail, and a lot of other weeds, not counting the stones that there is in some wheat,

especially Breton wheat. I don't like to grind Breton wheat no more than carpenters like to saw boards with nails in 'em. Just think of the dirt that all that makes in the till. And then they complain of the flour. It's their own fault. We ain't to blame for the flour."

Between two windows, a mower, seated at a table with a farmer, who was making a bargain for a piece of work to be done the next season, was saying: "There is no harm in the grass having the dew on. It cuts better. The dew is a good thing. It is all the same, that grass o' yours is young, and pretty hard to cut. You see it is so young; you see it bends under the scythe," etc.

Cosette was at her usual place, seated on the cross-piece of the kitchen table, near the fireplace; she was clad in rags; her bare feet were in wooden shoes, and by the light of the fire she was knitting woolen stockings for the little Thenardiers. A young kitten was playing under the chairs. In a neighboring room the fresh voices of two children were heard laughing and prattling; it was Eponine and Azelma.

In the chimney corner a cowhide hung upon a nail.

At intervals the cry of a very young child, which was somewhere in the house, was heard above the noise of the bar-room. This was a little boy which the woman had had some winters before—"She didn't know why," she said; "it was the cold weather"—and which was a little more than three years old. The mother had nursed him, but did not love him. When the hungry clamor of the brat became too much to bear: "Your boy is squalling," said Thenardier, "why don't you go and see what he wants?" "Bah!" answered the mother; "I am sick of him." And the poor little fellow continued to cry in the darkness.

II

TWO PORTRAITS COMPLETED

THE Thenardiers have hitherto been seen in this book in profile only; the time has come to turn this couple about and look at them on all sides.

Thenardier had just passed his 50th year; Mme. Thenardier had reached her 40th, which is the 50th for women;

so that there was an equilibrium of age between the husband and wife.

The reader has, perhaps, since her first appearance, preserved some remembrance of this huge Thenardiess—for such we shall call the female of this species—large, blond, red, fat, brawny, square, enormous, and agile; she belonged, as we have said, to the race of those colossal wild women who posturize at fairs with paving-stones hung in their hair. She did everything about the house—the chamber-work, the washing, the cooking, anything she pleased, and played the deuce generally. Cosette was her only servant; a mouse in the service of an elephant. Everything trembled at the sound of her voice; windows and furniture, as well as people. Her broad face, covered with freckles, had the appearance of a skimmer. She had beard. She was the ideal of a butcher's boy dressed in petticoats. She swore splendidly; she prided herself on being able to crack a nut with her fist. Apart from the novels she had read, which at times gave you an odd glimpse of the affected lady under the ogress, the idea of calling her a woman never would have occurred to anybody. This Thenardiess seemed like a cross between a wench and a fisherwoman. If you heard her speak you would say it is a gendarme; if you saw her drink you would say it is a cartman; if you saw her handle Cosette you would say it is the hangman. When at rest a tooth protruded from her mouth.

The other Thenardier was a little man, meagre, pale, angular, bony, and lean, who appeared to be sick and whose health was excellent; here his knavery began. He smiled habitually as a matter of business, and tried to be polite to everybody, even to the beggar to whom he refused a penny. He had the look of a weasel and the mien of a man of letters. He had a strong resemblance to the portraits of the Abbé Delille. He affected drinking with wagoners. Nobody ever saw him drunk. He smoked a large pipe. He wore a blouse, and under it an old black coat. He made pretensions to literature and materialism. There were names which he often pronounced in support of anything whatever that he might say. Voltaire, Raynal, Parny, and, oddly enough, St. Augustine. He professed to have "a system." For the rest, a great swindler.

A fellowsopher. There is such a variety. It will be remembered that he pretended to have been in the service; he related with some pomp that at Waterloo, being sergeant in a sixth or ninth light something, he alone, against a squadron of Hussars of death, had covered with his body, and saved, amid a shower of grape, "a general dangerously wounded." Hence the flaming picture on his sign and the name of his inn, which was spoken of in that region as the "tavern of the sergeant of Waterloo." He was liberal, classical, and a Bonapartist. He had subscribed for the "Champ d'Asile." It was said in the village that he had studied for the priesthood.

We believe that he had only studied in Holland to be an innkeeper. This whelp of the composite order was, according to all probability, some Fleming of Lille in Flanders, a Frenchman in Paris, a Belgian in Brussels, conveniently on the fence between the two frontiers. We understand his prowess at Waterloo. As we have seen, he exaggerated it a little. Ebb and flow, wandering, adventure was his element; a violated conscience is followed by a loose life; and without doubt, at the stormy epoch of the 18th of June, 1815, Thenardier belonged to that species of marauding sutlers of whom we have spoken, scouring the country, robbing here and selling there, and traveling in family style, man, woman, and children, in some rickety carry-all in the wake of marching troops, with the instinct to attach himself always to the victorious army. This campaign over, having, as he said, some "quibus," he had opened a "chop-house" at Montfermeil.

This "quibus," composed of purses and watches, gold rings and silver crosses, gathered at the harvest time in the furrows sown with corpses, did not form a great total, and had not lasted this sutler, now become a tavern-keeper, very long.

Thenardier had that indescribable stiffness of gesture which, with an oath, reminds you of the barracks, and, with a sign of the cross, of the seminary. He was a fine talker. He was fond of being thought learned. Nevertheless, the schoolmaster remarked that he made mistakes in pronunciation. He made out travelers' bills in a superior style, but practiced eyes sometimes found them faulty in orthography. Thenardier was sly, greedy, lounging,

and clever. He did not disdain servant-girls, consequently his wife had no more of them. This giantess was jealous. It seemed to her that this little, lean, and yellow man must be the object of universal desire.

Thenardier, above all a man of astuteness and poise, was a rascal of the subdued order. This is the worst species; there is hypocrisy in it.

Not that Thenardier was not on occasion capable of anger quite as much so as his wife; but that was very rare, and at such times, as if he were at war with the whole human race, as if he had in him a deep furnace of hatred, as if he were of those who were perpetually avenging themselves, who accuse everybody about them of the evils that befall them, and are always ready to throw on the first comer, as legitimate grievance, the sum total of the deceptions, failures, and calamities of their life—as all this leaven worked in him and boiled up into his mouth and eyes, he was frightful. Woe to him who came within reach of his fury then!

Besides all his other qualities Thenardier was attentive and penetrating, silent or talkative, as occasion required, and always with great intelligence. He had somewhat the look of sailors accustomed to squinting the eye in looking through spy-glasses. Thenardier was a statesman.

Each newcomer who entered the chop-house said, on seeing the Thenardiess: "There is the master of the house." It was an error. She was not even *the mistress.* The husband was both master and mistress. She performed, he created. He directed everything by a sort of invisible and continuous magnetic action. A word sufficed, sometimes a sign; the mastodon obeyed. Thenardier was to her, without her being really aware of it, a sort of being apart and sovereign. She had the virtues of her order of creation; never would she have differed with "M. Thenardier"—nor—impossible supposition—would she have publicly quarreled with her husband on any matter whatever. Never had she committed, "before company," that fault of which women are so often guilty, and which is called, in parliamentary language, discovering the crown. Although their accord had no other result than evil, there was food for contemplation in the submission of the Thenardiess to her husband. This bustling

mountain of flesh moved under the little finger of this frail despot. It was, viewed from its dwarfed and grotesque side, this great universal fact: the homage of matter to spirit; for certain deformities have their origin in the depths of eternal beauty. There was somewhat of the unknown in Thenardier; hence the absolute empire of this man over this woman. At times she looked upon him as upon a lighted candle; at others she felt him like a claw.

This woman was a formidable creation, who loved nothing but her children and feared nothing but her husband. She was a mother because she was a mammal. Her maternal feelings stopped with her girls, and, as we shall see, did not extend to boys. The man had but one thought—to get rich.

He did not succeed. His great talents had no adequate opportunity. Thenardier at Montfermeil was ruining himself, if ruin is possible at zero. In Switzerland, or in the Pyrenees, this penniless rogue would have become a millionaire. But where fate places the innkeeper he must browse.

It is understood that the word *innkeeper* is employed here in a restricted sense, and does not extend to an entire class.

In this same year, 1823, Thenardier owed about 1,500 francs of pressing debts, which rendered him moody.

However obstinately unjust destiny was to him, Thenardier was one of those men who best understand, to the greatest depth and in the most modern style, that which is a virtue among the barbarous and a subject of merchandise among the civilized—hospitality. He was, besides, an admirable poacher, and was counted an excellent shot. He had a certain cool and quiet laugh which was particularly dangerous.

His theories of innkeeping sometimes sprang from him by flashes. He had certain professional aphorisms, which he inculcated in the mind of his wife. "The duty of the innkeeper," said he to her one day, emphatically, and in a low voice, "is to sell to the first comer food, rest, light, fire, dirty linen, servants, fleas, and smiles; to stop travelers, empty small purses, and honestly lighten large ones; to receive families, who are traveling, with respect; scrape the man, pluck the woman, and pick the child; to charge

for the open window, the closed window, the chimney-corner, the sofa, the chair, the stool, the bench, the feather-bed, the mattress, the straw bed; to know how much the mirror is worn, and to tax that; and, by the 500,000 devils, to make the traveler pay for everything, even to the flies that his dog eats!"

This man and this woman were cunning and rage married—a hideous and terrible pair.

While the husband calculated and schemed the Thenardiess thought not of absent creditors, took no care either for yesterday or the morrow, and lived passionately in the present moment.

Such were these two beings. Cosette was between them, undergoing their double pressure, like a creature who is at the same time being bruised by a millstone and lacerated with pincers. The man and the woman had each a different way. Cosette was beaten unmercifully; that came from the woman. She went barefoot in winter; that came from the man.

Cosette ran upstairs and downstairs, washed, brushed, scrubbed, swept, ran, tired herself, got out of breath, lifted heavy things, and, puny as she was, did the rough work. No pity; a ferocious mistress, a malignant master. The Thenardier chop-house was like a snare, in which Cosette had been caught, and was trembling. The ideal of oppression was realized by this dismal servitude. It was something like a fly serving spiders.

The poor child was passive and silent.

When they find themselves in such condition at the dawn of existence, so young, so feeble, among men, what passes in these souls fresh from God!

III

MEN MUST HAVE WINE AND HORSES WATER

FOUR new guests had just come in.

Cosette was musing sadly; for, though she was only eight years old, she had already suffered so much that she mused with the mournful air of an old woman.

She had a black eye from a blow of the Thenardiess' fist,

which made the Thenardiess say from time to time: "How ugly she is with her patch on her eye."

Cosette was then thinking that it was evening, late in the evening, that the bowls and pitchers in the rooms of the travelers who had arrived must be filled immediately and that there was no more water in the cistern.

One thing comforted her a little; they did not drink much water in the Thenardier tavern. There were plenty of people there who were thirsty; but it was that kind of thirst which reaches rather toward the jug than the pitcher. Had anybody asked for a glass of water among these glasses of wine he would have seemed a savage to all those men. However, there was an instant when the child trembled; the Thenardiess raised the cover of a kettle which was boiling on the range, then took a glass and hastily approached the cistern. She turned the faucet; the child had raised her head and followed all her movements. A thin stream of water ran from the faucet and filled the glass half full.

"Here," said she, "there is no more water!" Then she was silent for a moment. The child held her breath.

"Pshaw!" continued the Thenardiess, examining the half-filled glass, "there is enough of it, such as it is."

Cosette resumed her work, but for more than a quarter of an hour she felt her heart leaping into her throat like a great ball.

She counted the minutes as they thus rolled away, and eagerly wished it were morning.

From time to time one of the drinkers would look out into the street and exclaim: "It is as black as an oven!" or, "It would take a cat to go along the street without a lantern to-night!" And Cosette shuddered.

All at once, one of the pedlers who lodged in the tavern came in and said in a harsh voice: "You have not watered my horse."

"Yes, we have, sure," replied the Thenardiess.

"I tell you no, ma'am," replied the pedler.

Cosette came out from under the table.

"Oh, yes, monsieur," said she, "the horse did drink; he drank in the bucket, the bucket full, and 'twas me that carried it to him, and I talked to him."

This was not true. Cosette lied.

"Here is a girl as big as my fist, who can tell a lie as big as a house," exclaimed the pedler. "I tell you that he has not had any water, little wench! He has a way of blowing when he has not had any water; that I know well enough."

Cosette persisted, and added in a voice stifled with anguish, and which could hardly be heard: "But he did drink a good deal."

"Come," continued the pedler, in a passion, "that is enough; give my horse some water, and say no more about it."

Cosette went back under the table.

"Well, of course that is right," said the Thenardiess; "if the beast has not had any water, she must have some."

Then looking about her: "Well, what has become of that girl?"

She stooped down and discovered Cosette crouched at the other end of the table, almost under the feet of the drinkers.

"Aren't you coming?" cried the Thenardiess.

Cosette came out of the kind of hole where she had hidden. The Thenardiess continued: "Mdlle. Dog-without-a-name, go and carry some drink to this horse."

"But, ma'am," said Cosette feebly, "there is no water."

The Thenardiess threw the street door wide open.

"Well, go after some!"

Cosette hung her head and went for an empty bucket that was by the chimney corner.

The bucket was larger than she, and the child could have sat down in it comfortably.

The Thenardiess went back to her range, and tasted what was in the kettle with a wooden spoon, grumbling the while.

"There is some at the spring. She is the worst girl that ever was. I think 'twould have been better if I'd left out the onions."

Then she fumbled in a drawer where there were some pennies, pepper, and garlic.

"Here, Mdlle. Toad," added she, "get a big loaf at the baker's as you come back. Here is 15 sous."

Cosette had a little pocket in the side of her apron; she

took the piece without saying a word and put it in that pocket.

Then she remained motionless, bucket in hand, the open door before her. She seemed to be waiting for somebody to come to her aid.

"Get along!" cried the Thenardiess.

Cosette went out. The door closed.

IV

A DOLL ENTERS UPON THE SCENE

THE row of booths extended along the street from the church, the reader will remember, as far as the Thenardier tavern. These booths, on account of the approaching passage of the citizens on their way to the midnight mass, were all illuminated with candles, burning in paper lanterns, which, as the schoolmaster of Montfermeil, who was at that moment seated at one of Thenardier's tables, said, produced a magical effect. In retaliation not a star was to be seen in the sky.

The last of these stalls, set up exactly opposite Thenardier's door, was a toy-shop, all glittering with trinkets, glass beads, and things magnificent in tin. In the first rank, and in front, the merchant had placed upon a bed of white napkins a great doll nearly two feet high, dressed in a robe of pink crape with golden wheat-ears on its head, and which had real hair and enamel eyes. The whole day this marvel had been displayed to the bewilderment of the passers under ten years of age, but there had not been found in Montfermeil a mother rich enough, or prodigal enough, to give it to her child. Eponine and Azelma had passed hours in contemplating it, and Cosette herself, furtively it is true, had dared to look at it.

At the moment when Cosette went out, bucket in hand, all gloomy and overwhelmed as she was, she could not help raising her eyes toward this wonderful doll, toward *the lady,* as she called it. The poor child stopped petrified. She had not seen this doll so near before.

This whole booth seemed a palace to her; this doll was not a doll, it was a vision. It was joy, splendor, riches, happiness, and it appeared in a sort of chimerical radiance

to this unfortunate little being, buried so deeply in a cold and dismal misery. Cosette was measuring with the sad and simple sagacity of childhood the abyss which separated her from that doll. She was saying to herself that one must be a queen, or at least a princess, to have a "thing" like that. She gazed upon this beautiful pink dress, this beautiful smooth hair, and she was thinking: "How happy must be that doll!" Her eyes could not turn away from this fantastic booth. The longer she looked the more she was dazzled. She thought she saw paradise. There were other dolls behind the large one that appeared to her to be fairies and genii. The merchant walking to and fro in the back part of his stall suggested the Eternal Father.

In this adoration she forgot everything, even the errand on which she had been sent. Suddenly, the harsh voice of the Thenardiess called her back to the reality: "How, jade, haven't you gone yet? Hold on; I am coming for you! I'd like to know what she's doing here? Little monster, be off!"

The Thenardiess had glanced into the street and perceived Cosette in ecstasy.

Cosette fled with her bucket, running as fast as she could.

V

THE LITTLE GIRL ALL ALONE

AS the Thenardier tavern was in that part of the village which is near the church, Cosette had to go to the spring in the woods toward Chelles to draw water.

She looked no more at the displays in the booths so long as she was in the Lane du Boulanger; and in the vicinity of the church the illuminated stalls lighted the way, but soon the last gleam from the last stall disappeared. The poor child found herself in darkness. She became buried in it. Only, as she became the prey of a certain sensation, she shook the handle of the bucket as much as she could on her way. That made a noise, which kept her company.

The further she went the thicker became the darkness.

There was no longer anybody in the street. However, she met a woman who turned around on seeing her pass, and remained motionless, muttering between her teeth: "Where in the world can that child be going? Is it a phantom child?" Then the woman recognized Cosette. "Oh," said she, "is it the Lark?"

Cosette thus passed through the labyrinth of crooked and deserted streets which terminates the village of Montfermeil toward Chelles. As long as she had houses, or even walls, on the sides of the road she went on boldly enough. From time to time, she saw the light of a candle through the cracks of a shutter; it was light and life to her; there were people there; that kept up her courage. However, as she advanced, her speed slackened as if mechanically. When she had passed the corner of the last house Cosette stopped. To go beyond the last booth had been difficult; to go further than the last house became impossible. She put the bucket on the ground, buried her hands in her hair, and began to scratch her head slowly, a motion peculiar to terrified and hesitating children. It was Montfermeil no longer, it was the open country; dark and deserted space was before her. She looked with despair into this darkness where nobody was, where there were beasts, where there were, perhaps, ghosts. She looked intensely, and she heard the animals walking in the grass, and she distinctly saw the ghosts moving in the trees. Then she seized her bucket again; fear gave her boldness: "Pshaw!" said she, "I will tell her there isn't any more water!" And she resolutely went back into Montfermeil.

She had scarcely gone a hundred steps when she stopped again and began to scratch her head. Now, it was the Thenardiess that appeared to her, the hideous Thenardiess, with her hyena mouth, and wrath flashing from her eyes. The child cast a pitiful glance before her and behind her. What could she do? What would become of her? Where should she go? Before her, the spectre of the Thenardiess; behind her all the phantoms of night and of the forest. It was at the Thenardiess that she recoiled. She took the road to the spring again and began to run. She ran out of the village; she ran into the wood, seeing nothing, hearing nothing. She did not stop running until out

of breath, and even then she staggered on. She went right on, desperate.

Even while running she wanted to cry.

The nocturnal tremulousness of the forest wrapped her about completely.

She thought no more; she saw nothing more. The immensity of night confronted this little creature. On one side, the infinite shadow; on the other, an atom.

It was only seven or eight minutes' walk from the edge of the woods to the spring. Cosette knew the road from traveling it several times a day. Strange thing she did not lose her way. A remnant of instinct guided her blindly. But she neither turned her eyes to the right nor to the left, for fear of seeing things in the trees and in the bushes. Thus she arrived at the spring.

It was a small, natural basin, made by the water in the loamy soil, about two feet deep, surrounded with moss and with that long figured grass called Henry IV' collars, and paved with a few large stones. A brook escaped from it with a gentle, tranquil murmur.

Cosette did not take time to breathe. It was very dark, but she was accustomed to come to this fountain. She felt with her left hand in the darkness for a young oak which bent over the spring and usually served her as a support, found a branch, swung herself from it, bent down and plunged the bucket in the water. She was for a moment so excited that her strength was tripled. When she was thus bent over, she did not notice that the pocket of her apron emptied itself into the spring. The 15-sou piece fell into the water. Cosette neither saw it nor heard it fall. She drew out the bucket almost full and set it on the grass.

This done, she perceived that her strength was exhausted. She was anxious to start at once; but the effort of filling the bucket had been so great that it was impossible for her to take a step. She was compelled to sit down. She fell upon the grass and remained in a crouching posture.

She closed her eyes, then she opened them, without knowing why, without the power of doing otherwise. At her side, the water shaken in the bucket made circles that resembled serpents of white fire.

Above her head, the sky was covered with vast black clouds which were like sheets of smoke. The tragic mask of night seemed to bend vaguely over this child.

Jupiter was setting in the depths of the horizon.

The child looked with a startled eye upon that great star which she did not know and which made her afraid. The planet, in fact, was at that moment very near the horizon, and was crossing a dense bed of mist which gave it a horrid redness. The mist gloomily empurpled, magnified the star. One would have called it a luminous wound.

A cold wind blew from the plain. The woods were dark, without any rustling of leaves, without any of those vague and fresh coruscations of summer. Great branches drew themselves up fearfully. Mean and shapeless bushes whistled in the glades. The tall grass wriggled under the north wind like eels. The brambles twisted about like long arms seeking to seize their prey in their claws. Some dry weeds driven by the wind passed rapidly by, and appeared to flee with dismay before something that was following. The prospect was dismal.

Darkness makes the brain giddy. Man needs light. Whoever plunges into the opposite of day feels his heart chilled. When the eye sees blackness the mind sees trouble. In an eclipse, in night, in the sooty darkness, there is anxiety even to the strongest. Nobody walks alone at night in the forest without trembling. Darkness and trees, two formidable depths—a reality of chimeras appear in the indistinct distance. The inconceivable outlines itself a few steps from you with a spectral clearness. You see floating in space or in your brain something strangely vague and unseizable as the dreams of sleeping flowers. There are fierce phantoms in the horizon. You breathe in the odors of the great black void. You are afraid, and are tempted to look behind you. The hollowness of night, the haggardness of all things, the silent profiles that fade away as you advance, the obscure dishevelments, angry clumps, livid pools, the gloom reflected in the funereal, the sepulchral immensity of silence, the possible unknown beings, the swayings of mysterious branches, the frightful twistings of the trees, long spires of shivering grass —against all this you have no defence. There is no bravery which does not shudder and feel the nearness of an-

guish. You feel something hideous, as if the soul were amalgamating with the shadow. This penetration of the darkness is inexpressibly dismal for a child.

Forests are apocalypses; and the beating of the wings of a little soul makes an agonizing sound under their monstrous vault.

Without being conscious of what she was experiencing, Cosette felt that she was seized by this black enormity of nature. It was not merely terror that held her, but something more terrible even than terror. She shuddered. Words fail to express the peculiar strangeness of that shudder which chilled her through and through. Her eye had become wild. She felt that perhaps she would be compelled to return there at the same hour the next night.

Then, by a sort of instinct, to get out of this singular state, which she did not understand, but which terrified her, she began to count aloud one, two, three, four, up to ten, and when she had finished she began again. This restored her to a real perception of things about her. Her hands, which she had wet in drawing the water, felt cold. She arose. Her fear had returned, a natural and insurmountable fear. She had only one thought, to fly; to fly with all her might across woods, across fields, to houses, to windows, to lighted candles. Her eyes fell upon the bucket that was before her. Such was the dread with which the Thenardiess inspired her that she did not dare to go without the bucket of water. She grasped the handle with both hands. She could hardly lift the bucket.

She went a dozen steps in this manner, but the bucket was full; it was heavy; she was compelled to rest it on the ground. She breathed an instant, then grasped the handle again and walked on, this time a little longer. But she had to stop again. After resting a few seconds she started on. She walked, bending forward, her head down, like an old woman; the weight of the bucket strained and stiffened her thin arms. The iron handle was numbing and freezing her little wet hands; from time to time she had to stop, and every time she stopped the cold water that splashed from the bucket fell upon her naked knees. This took place in the depth of a wood, at night, in the winter, far from all human sight; it was a child of eight years;

there was none but God at that moment who saw this sad thing.

And undoubtedly her mother, alas!

For there are things which open the eyes of the dead in their grave.

She breathed with a kind of mournful rattle; sobs choked her, but she did not dare to weep, so fearful was she of the Thenardiess, even at a distance. She always imagined that the Thenardiess was near.

However, she could not make much headway in this manner, and was getting along very slowly. She tried hard to shorten her resting spells and to walk as far as possible between them. She remembered with anguish that it would take her more than an hour to return to Montfermeil thus, and that the Thenardiess would beat her. This anguish added to her dismay at being alone in the woods at night. She was worn out with fatigue, and was not yet out of the forest. Arriving near an old chestnut tree, which she knew, she made a last halt, longer than the others, to get well rested, then she gathered all her strength, took up the bucket again, and began to walk on courageously. Meanwhile the poor little despairing thing could not help crying: "Oh, my God! my God!"

At that moment she felt all at once that the weight of the bucket was gone. A hand, which seemed enormous to her, had just caught the handle and was carrying it easily. She raised her head. A large, dark form, straight and erect, was walking beside her in the gloom. It was a man who had come up behind her and whom she had not heard. This man, without saying a word, had grasped the handle of the bucket she was carrying.

There are instincts for all the crises of life.

The child was not afraid.

VI

WHICH, PERHAPS, PROVES THE INTELLIGENCE OF BOULATRUELLE

IN the afternoon of that same Christmas day, 1823, a man walked a long time in the most deserted portion of the Boulevard de l'Hôpital at Paris. This man had the appearance of some one who was looking for lodgings,

and seemed to stop by preference before the most modest houses of this dilapidated part of the Faubourg St. Marceau.

We shall see further on that this man did, in fact, hire a room in this isolated quarter.

This man, in his dress, as in his whole person, realized the type of what might be called the mendicant of good society — extreme misery being combined with extreme neatness. It is a rare coincidence which inspires intelligent hearts with this double respect that we feel for him who is very poor and for him who is very worthy. He wore a round hat, very old and carefully brushed; a long coat, completely threadbare, of coarse, yellow cloth, a color which was in nowise extraordinary at that epoch; a large waistcoat, with pockets of antique style; black trousers, worn gray at the knees; black woolen stockings and thick shoes, with copper buckles. One would have called him an old preceptor of a good family returned from the emigration. From his hair, which was entirely white; from his wrinkled brow, from his livid lips, from his face, in which everything breathed exhaustion and weariness of life, one would have supposed him considerably over sixty. From his firm, though slow step, and the singular vigor impressed upon all his motions, one would hardly have thought him fifty. The wrinkles on his forehead were well disposed, and would have prepossessed in his favor any one who observed him with attention. His lip contracted with a strange expression, which seemed severe and yet which was humble. There was in the depths of his eye an indescribable mournful serenity. He carried in his left hand a small package tied in a handkerchief, with his right he leaned upon a sort of staff cut from a hedge. This staff had been finished with some care and did not look very badly; the knots were smoothed down and a coral head had been formed with red wax; it was a cudgel, and it seemed a cane.

There are few people on that boulevard, especially in winter. This man appeared to avoid them rather than seek them, but without affectation.

At that epoch the king, Louis XVIII, went almost every day to Choisy Le Roy. It was one of his favorite rides. About two o'clock, almost invariably, the carriage

and the royal cavalcade were seen to pass at full speed through the Boulevard de l'Hôpital.

This supplied the place of watch and clock to the poor women of the quarter, who would say: "It is two o'clock; there he is going back to the Tuileries."

And some ran and others fell into line, for when a king passes by there is always a tumult. Moreover, the appearance and disappearance of Louis XVIII produced a certain sensation in the streets of Paris. It was rapid, but majestic. This impotent king had a taste for fast driving; not being able to walk, he wished to run; this cripple would have gladly been drawn by the lightning. He passed by, peaceful and severe, in the midst of naked sabres. His massive coach, all gilded, with great lily branches painted on the panels, rolled noisily along. One hardly had time to catch a glance of it. In the back corner, on the right, could be seen, upon cushions covered with white satin, a broad face, firm and red; a forehead freshly powdered à la bird of paradise; a proud eye, stern and keen; a well-bred smile, two large epaulets of bullion waving over a citizen's dress, the golden fleece, the cross of St. Louis, the cross of the Legion of Honor, the silver badge of the Holy Spirit, a big belly and a large blue ribbon; that was the king. Outside of Paris he held his hat, with white feathers, upon his knees, which were inclosed in high English gaiters; when he re-entered the city he placed his hat upon his head, bowing but little. He looked coldly upon the people, who returned his look. When he appeared for the first time in the Quartier St. Marceau, all he succeeded in eliciting was this saying of a resident to his comrade: "It's that big fellow who is the government."

This unfailing passage of the king at the same hour was, then, the daily event of the Boulevard de l'Hôpital.

The promenader in the yellow coat evidently did not belong to the quarter, and probably not to Paris, for he was ignorant of the circumstance. When, at two o'clock, the royal carriage, surrounded by a squadron of silver-laced body-guard, turned into the boulevard, after passing La Salpêtrière, he appeared surprised and almost frightened. There was no one else in the cross alley, and he retired hastily behind a corner of the side wall, but this did not prevent the Duke d'Havré seeing him. The Duke

d'Havré, as captain of the guards in waiting that day, was seated in the carriage opposite the king. He said to his Majesty: "There is a man who has a bad look."

Some policemen, who were clearing the passage for the king, also noticed him; one of them was ordered to follow him. But the man plunged into the little solitary streets of the faubourg, and, as night was coming on, the officer lost his track, as is established by a report addressed on the same evening to the Comte Anglès, Minister of State, prefect of police.

When the man in the yellow coat had thrown the officer off his track he turned about, not without looking back many times to make sure that he was not followed. At 4:15 o'clock—that is to say, after dark—he passed in front of the theatre of the Porte St. Martin, where the play that day was the "Two Convicts." The poster, lit up by the reflection from the theatre, seemed to strike him, for, although he was walking rapidly, he stopped to read it. A moment after he was in the cul-de-sac de la Planchette, and entered the "Pewter Platter," which was then the office of the Lagny stage. This stage started at 4:30. The horses were harnessed, and the travelers, who had been called by the driver hastily, were climbing the high iron steps of the vehicle.

The man asked: "Have you a seat?"

"Only one, beside me, on the box," said the driver.

"I will take it."

"Get up, then."

Before starting, however, the driver cast a glance at the poor apparel of the traveler and at the smallness of his bundle, and took his pay.

"Are you going through to Lagny?" asked the driver.

"Yes," said the man.

The traveler paid through to Lagny.

They started off. When they had passed the barrière the driver tried to start a conversation, but the traveler answered only in monosyllables. The driver concluded to whistle and swear at his horses.

The driver wrapped himself up in his cloak. It was cold. The man did not appear to notice it. In this way they passed through Gournay and Neuilly sur Marne. About six o'clock in the evening they were at Chelles. The

driver stopped to let his horses breathe in front of the wagoners' tavern established in the old buildings of the royal abbey.

"I will get down here," said the man.

He took his bundle and stick and jumped down from the stage.

A moment afterward he had disappeared.

He did not go into the tavern.

When, a few minutes afterward, the stage started off for Lagny it did not overtake him in the main street of Chelles.

The driver turned to the inside passengers: "There," said he, "is a man who does not belong here, for I don't know him. He has an appearance of not having a sou; however, he don't stick about money; he pays to Lagny and he only goes to Chelles. It is night, all the houses are shut, he don't go to the tavern and we don't overtake him. He must, then, have sunk into the ground."

The man had not sunk into the ground; but he had hurried rapidly in the darkness along the main street of Chelles; then he had turned to the left, before reaching the church, into the cross-road leading to Montfermeil, like one who knew the country and had been that way before.

He followed this road rapidly. At the spot where it intersects the old road bordered with trees that goes from Gagny to Lagny he heard footsteps approaching. He concealed himself hastily in a ditch and awaited there till the people who were passing were a good distance off. The precaution was indeed almost superfluous, for, as we have already said, it was a very dark December night. There were scarcely two or three stars to be seen in the sky.

It is at this point that the ascent of the hill begins. The man did not return to the Montfermeil road. He turned to the right across the fields and gained the woods with rapid strides.

When he reached the wood he slackened his pace and began to look carefully at all the trees, pausing at every step, as if he were seeking and following a mysterious route, known only to himself. There was a moment when he appeared to lose himself, and when he stopped, undecided. Finally he arrived, by continual groping, at a glade where there was a heap of large whitish stones. He

made his way quickly toward these stones, and examined them with attention in the dusk of the night, as if he were passing them in review. A large tree, covered with those excrescences which are the warts of vegetation, was a few steps from the heap of stones. He went to this tree, and passed his hand over the bark of the trunk, as if he were seeking to recognize and to count all the warts.

Opposite this tree, which was an ash, there was a chestnut tree wounded in the bark, which had been stanched with a bandage of zinc nailed on. He rose on tiptoe and touched that band of zinc.

Then he stamped for some time upon the ground in the space between the tree and the stones, like one who would be sure that the earth had not been freshly stirred.

This done, he took his course and resumed his walk through the woods.

This was the man who had fallen in with Cosette.

As he made his way through the copse in the direction of Montfermeil, he had perceived that little shadow, struggling along with a groan, setting her burden on the ground, then taking it up and going on again. He had approached her and seen that it was a very young child carrying an enormous bucket of water. Then he had gone to the child and silently taken hold of the handle of the bucket.

VII

COSETTE SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE UNKNOWN IN THE DARKNESS

COSETTE, we have said, was not afraid.

The man spoke to her. His voice was serious, and was almost a whisper.

"My child, that is very heavy for you, which you are carrying there."

Cosette raised her head and answered: "Yes, monsieur."

"Give it to me," the man continued. "I will carry it for you."

Cosette let go of the bucket. The man walked along with her.

"It is very heavy, indeed," said he to himself. Then he added: "Little girl, how old are you?"

"Eight years, monsieur."

"And have you come far in this way?"

"From the spring in the woods."

"And are you going far?"

"A good quarter of an hour from here."

The man remained a moment without speaking, then he said, abruptly: "You have no mother, then?"

"I don't know," answered the child.

Before the man had had time to say a word she added: "I don't believe I have. All the rest have one. For my part, I have none."

And after a silence she added: "I believe I never had any."

The man stopped, put the bucket on the ground, stooped down and placed his hands upon the child's shoulders, making an effort to look at her and see her face in the darkness.

The thin and puny face of Cosette was vaguely outlined in the livid light of the sky.

"What is your name?" said the man.

"Cosette."

It seemed as if the man had an electric shock. He looked at her again, then, letting go of her shoulders, took up the bucket, and walked on.

A moment after he asked: "Little girl, where do you live?"

"At Montfermeil, if you know it."

"Is it there that we are going?"

"Yes, monsieur."

He made another pause, then he began: "Who is it that has sent you out into the woods after water at this time of night?"

"Mme. Thenardier."

The man resumed with a tone of voice which he tried to render indifferent, but in which there was, nevertheless, a singular tremor: "What does she do, your Mme. Thenardier?"

"She is my mistress," said the child. "She keeps the tavern."

"The tavern," said the man. "Well, I am going there to lodge to-night. Show me the way."

"We are going there," said the child.

The man walked very fast. Cosette followed him with-

out difficulty. She felt fatigue no more. From time to time she raised her eyes toward this man with a sort of tranquillity and inexpressible confidence. She had never been taught to turn toward Providence and to pray. However, she felt in her bosom something that resembled hope and joy, and which rose toward heaven.

A few minutes passed. The man spoke: "Is there no servant at Mme. Thenardier's?"

"No, monsieur."

"Are you alone?"

"Yes, monsieur."

There was another interval of silence. Cosette raised her voice: "That is, there are two little girls."

"What little girls?"

"Ponine and Zelma."

The child simplified in this way the romantic names dear to the mother.

"What are Ponine and Zelma?"

"They are Mme. Thenardier's young ladies, you might say her daughters."

"And what do they do?"

"Oh," said the child, "they have beautiful dolls, things which there's gold in; they are full of business. They play, they amuse themselves."

"All day long?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"And you?"

"Me! I work."

"All day long?"

The child raised her large eyes in which there was a tear, which could not be seen in the darkness, and answered, softly: "Yes, monsieur."

She continued after an interval of silence: "Sometimes, when I have finished my work and they are willing, I amuse myself also."

"How do you amuse yourself?"

"The best I can. They let me alone. But I have not many playthings. Ponine and Zelma are not willing for me to play with their dolls. I have only a little lead sword, not longer than that."

The child showed her little finger.

"And which does not cut?"

"Yes, monsieur," said the child, "it cuts lettuce and flies' heads."

They reached the village; Cosette guided the stranger through the streets. They passed by the bakery, but Cosette did not think of the bread she was to have brought back. The man questioned her no more, and now maintained a mournful silence. When they had passed the church, the man, seeing all these booths in the street, asked Cosette: "Is it fair time here?"

"No, monsieur, it is Christmas."

As they drew near the tavern Cosette timidly touched his arm: "Monsieur?"

"What, my child?"

"Here we are close by the house."

"Well?"

"Will you let me take the bucket now?"

"What for?"

"Because, if madame sees that anybody brought it for me, she will beat me."

The man gave her the bucket. A moment after they were at the door of the chop-house.

VIII

INCONVENIENCE OF ENTERTAINING A POOR MAN WHO IS, PERHAPS, RICH

COSETTE could not help casting one look toward the grand doll still displayed in the toy-shop, then she rapped. The door opened. The Thenardiess appeared with a candle in her hand.

"Oh! it is you, you little beggar! Lud-a-massy! you have taken your time! she has been playing, the wench!"

"Madame," said Cosette, trembling, "here is a gentleman who is coming to lodge."

The Thenardiess very quickly replaced her fierce air by her amiable grimace, a change at sight peculiar to innkeepers, and looked for the newcomer with eager eyes.

"Is it monsieur?" said she.

"Yes, madame," answered the man, touching his hat.

Rich travelers are not so polite. This gesture and the sight of the stranger's costume and baggage which the

Thenardiess passed in review at a glance made the amiable grimace disappear and the fierce air reappear. She added, dryly: "Enter, good man."

The "good man" entered. The Thenardiess cast a second glance at him, examined particularly his long coat, which was absolutely threadbare, and his hat, which was somewhat broken, and with a nod, a wink, and a turn of her nose, consulted her husband, who was still drinking with the wagoners. The husband answered by that imperceptible shake of the forefinger which, supported by a protrusion of the lips, signifies in such a case "complete destitution." Upon this the Thenardiess exclaimed: "Ah! my brave man, I am very sorry, but I have no room."

"Put me where you will," said the man; "in the garret, in the stable. I will pay as if I had a room."

"Forty sous."

"Forty sous. Well."

"In advance."

"Forty sous," whispered a wagoner to the Thenardiess; "but it is only twenty sous."

"It is forty sous for him," replied the Thenardiess, in the same tone. "I don't lodge poor people for less."

"That is true," added her husband, softly; "it ruins a house to have this sort of people."

Meanwhile the man, after leaving his stick and bundle on the bench, had seated himself at a table on which Cosette had been quick to place a bottle of wine and a glass. The pedler, who had asked for a bucket of water, had gone himself to carry it to his horse. Cosette had resumed her place under the kitchen table and her knitting.

The man, who hardly touched his lips to the wine he had turned out, was contemplating the child with a strange attention.

Cosette was ugly. Happy, she might, perhaps, have been pretty. We have already sketched this little pitiful face. Cosette was thin and pale; she was nearly eight years old, but one would hardly have thought her six. Her large eyes, sunk in a sort of shadow, were almost put out by continual weeping. The corners of her mouth had that curve of habitual anguish which is seen in the condemned and in the hopelessly sick. Her hands were, as her mother had guessed, "covered with chilblains." The light of the

fire which was shining upon her made her bones stand out and rendered her thinness fearfully visible. As she was always shivering, she had acquired the habit of drawing her knees together. Her whole dress was nothing but a rag, which would have excited pity in the summer, and which excited horror in the winter. She had on nothing but cotton, and that full of holes; not a rag of woolen. Her skin showed here and there, and black-and-blue spots could be distinguished, which indicated the places where the Thenardiess had touched her. Her naked legs were red and rough. The hollows under her collar-bones would make one weep. The whole person of this child, her gait, her attitude, the sound of her voice, the intervals between one word and another, her looks, her silence, her least motion, expressed and uttered a single idea—fear.

Fear was spread all over her; she was, so to say, covered with it; fear drew back her elbows against her sides, drew her heels under her skirt, made her take the least possible room, prevented her from breathing more than was absolutely necessary, and had become what might be called her bodily habit, without possible variation, except of increase. There was in the depth of her eye an expression of astonishment mingled with terror.

This fear was such that, on coming in, all wet as she was, Cosette had not dared go and dry herself by the fire, but had gone silently to her work.

The expression of the countenance of this child of eight years was habitually so sad, and sometimes so tragical, that it seemed, at certain moments, as if she were in the way of becoming an idiot or a demon.

Never, as we have said, had she known what it is to pray, never had she set foot within a church. "How can I spare the time?" said the Thenardiess.

The man in the yellow coat did not take his eyes from Cosette.

Suddenly, the Thenardiess exclaimed out: "Oh! I forgot! that bread!"

Cosette, according to her custom whenever the Thenardiess raised her voice, sprang out quickly from under the table.

She had entirely forgotten the bread. She had recourse to the expedient of children who are always terrified. She lied.

"Madame, the baker was shut."

"You ought to have knocked."

"I did knock, madame."

"Well?"

"He didn't open."

"I'll find out to-morrow if that is true," said the Thenardiess: "and if you are lying you will lead a pretty dance. Meantime, give me back the 15-sou piece."

Cosette plunged her hand into her apron pocket and turned white. The 15-sou piece was not there.

"Come," said the Thenardiess; "didn't you hear me?"

Cosette turned her pocket inside out; there was nothing there. What could have become of that money? The little unfortunate could not utter a word. She was petrified.

"Have you lost it, the 15-sou piece?" screamed the Thenardiess; "or do you want to steal it from me?"

At the same time she reached her arm toward the cowhide hanging in the chimney corner.

This menacing movement gave Cosette the strength to cry out: "Forgive me! Madame! Madame! I won't do so any more!"

The Thenardiess took down the whip.

Meanwhile the man in the yellow coat had been fumbling in his waistcoat pocket without being noticed. The other travelers were drinking or playing cards, and paid no attention to anything.

Cosette was writhing with anguish in the chimney corner, trying to gather up and hide her poor, half-naked limbs. The Thenardiess raised her arm.

"I beg your pardon, madame," said the man; "but I just saw something fall out of the pocket of that little girl's apron and roll away. That may be it."

At the same time he stooped down and appeared to search on the floor for an instant.

"Just so, here it is," said he, rising.

And he handed a silver piece to the Thenardiess.

"Yes, that is it," said she.

That was not it, for it was a 20-sou piece, but the Thenardiess found her profit in it. She put the piece in her pocket, and contented herself with casting a ferocious look at the child and saying: "Don't let that happen again, ever."

Cosette went back to what the Thenardiess called "her hole," and her large eye, fixed upon the unknown traveler, began to assume an expression that it had never known before. It was still only an artless astonishment, but a sort of blind confidence was associated with it.

"Oh! you want supper?" asked the Thenardiess of the traveler.

He did not answer. He seemed to be thinking deeply.

"What is that man?" said she, between her teeth. "It is some frightful pauper. He hasn't a penny for his supper. Is he going to pay me for his lodging only? It is very lucky, anyway, that he didn't think to steal the money that was on the floor."

A door now opened and Eponine and Azelma came in.

They were really two pretty little girls, rather city girls than peasants, very charming, one with her well-polished auburn tresses, the other with her long black braids falling down her back, and both so lively, neat, plump, fresh, and healthy, that it was a pleasure to see them. They were warmly clad, but with such maternal art, that the thickness of the stuff detracted nothing from the coquetry of the fit. Winter was provided against without effacing spring. These two little girls shed light around them. Moreover, they were regnant. In their toilette, in their gayety, in the noise they made, there was sovereignty. When they entered, the Thenardiess said to them in a scolding tone, which was full of adoration: "Ah! you are here, then, you children!"

Then, taking them upon her knees one after the other, smoothing their hair, tying over their ribbons, and finally letting them go with that gentle sort of shake which is peculiar to mothers, she exclaimed: "Are they dowdies?"

They went and sat down by the fire. They had a doll which they turned backward and forward upon their knees with many pretty prattlings. From time to time Cosette raised her eyes from her knitting and looked sadly at them as they were playing.

Eponine and Azelma did not notice Cosette. To them she was like the dog. These three little girls could not count twenty-four years among them all, and they already represented all human society; on one side envy, on the other disdain.

The doll of the Thenardier sisters was very much faded, and very old and broken; but it appeared, none the less, wonderful to Cosette, who had never in her life had a doll, a real doll, to use an expression that all children will understand.

All at once the Thenardiess, who was continually going and coming about the room, noticed that Cosette's attention was distracted, and that instead of working she was busied with the little girls who were playing.

"Ah! I've caught you!" cried she. "That is the way you work! I'll make you work with a cowhide, I will."

The stranger, without leaving his chair, turned toward the Thenardiess.

"Madame," said he, smiling diffidently. "Pshaw! let her play!"

On the part of any traveler who had eaten a slice of mutton, and drank two bottles of wine at his supper, and who had not had the appearance of a *horrid pauper,* such a wish would have been a command. But that a man who wore that hat should allow himself to have a desire, and that a man who wore that coat should permit himself to have a wish, was what the Thenardiess thought ought not to be tolerated. She replied, sharply: "She must work, for she eats. I don't support her to do nothing."

"What is it she is making?" said the stranger, in that gentle voice which contrasted so strangely with his beggar's clothes and his porter's shoulders.

The Thenardiess deigned to answer.

"Stockings, if you please. Stockings for my little girls who have none, worth speaking of, and will soon be going barefooted."

The man looked at Cosette's poor red feet, and continued: "When will she finish that pair of stockings?"

"It will take her at least three or four good days, the lazy thing."

"And how much might this pair of stockings be worth when it is finished?"

The Thenardiess cast a disdainful glance at him.

"At least thirty sous."

"Would you take five francs for them?" said the man.

"Goodness!" exclaimed a wagoner, who was listening,

with a hoarse laugh, "five francs? It's a humbug; five bullets!"

Thenardier now thought it time to speak.

"Yes, monsieur, if it is your fancy, you can have that pair of stockings for five francs. We can't refuse anything to travelers."

"You must pay for them now," said the Thenardiess, in her short and peremptory way.

"I will buy that pair of stockings," answered the man, "and," added he, drawing a five-franc piece from his pocket and laying it on the table, "I will pay for them."

Then he turned toward Cosette.

"Now your work belongs to me. Play, my child!"

The wagoner was so affected by the five-franc piece that he left his glass and went to look at it.

"It's so, that's a fact!" cried he, as he looked at it. "A regular hind wheel; and no counterfeit!"

Thenardier approached and silently put the piece in his pocket.

The Thenardiess had nothing to reply. She bit her lips, and her face assumed an expression of hatred.

Meanwhile Cosette trembled. She ventured to ask: "Madame, is it true? Can I play?"

"Play!" said the Thenardiess in a terrible voice.

"Thank you, madame," said Cosette. And, while her mouth thanked the Thenardiess, all her little soul was thanking the traveler.

Thenardier returned to his drink. His wife whispered in his ear: "What can that yellow man be?"

"I have seen," answered Thenardier, in a commanding tone, "millionaires with coats like that."

Cosette had left her knitting, but she had not moved from her place. Cosette always stirred as little as was possible. She had taken from a little box behind her a few old rags and her little lead sword.

Eponine and Azelma paid no attention to what was going on. They had just performed a very important operation; they had caught the kitten. They had thrown the doll on the floor, and Eponine, the elder, was dressing the kitten, in spite of her miaulings and contortions, with a lot of clothes and red and blue rags. While she was engaged in this serious and difficult labor, she was talking to her

sister in that sweet and charming language of children, the grace of which, like the splendor of the butterfly's wing, escapes when we try to preserve it.

"Look! look! sister, this doll is more amusing than the other. She moves, she cries, she is warm. Come, sister, let us play with her. She shall be my little girl; I will be a lady. I'll come to see you, and you must look at her. By and by you must see her whiskers, and you must be surprised. And then you must see her ears, and then you must see her tail, and that will astonish you. And you must say to me: 'Oh! my stars!' and I will say to you, 'Yes, madame, it is a little girl that I have like that. Little girls are like that now.' "

Azelma listened to Eponine with wonder.

Meanwhile, the drinkers were singing an obscene song, at which they laughed enough to shake the room. Thenardier encouraged and accompanied them.

As birds make a nest of anything, children make a doll of no matter what. While Eponine and Azelma were dressing up the cat, Cosette, for her part, had dressed up the sword. That done, she had laid it upon her arm, and was singing it softly to sleep.

The doll is one of the most imperious necessities, and at the same time one of the most charming instincts of female childhood. To care for, to clothe, to adorn, to dress, to undress, to dress over again, to teach, to scold a little, to rock, to cuddle, to put to sleep, to imagine that something is somebody—all the future of woman is there. Even while musing and prattling, while making little wardrobes and little baby-clothes, while sewing little dresses, little bodices, and little jackets, the child becomes a little girl, the little girl becomes a great girl, the great girl becomes a woman. The first baby takes the place of the last doll.

A little girl without a doll is almost as unfortunate and quite as impossible as a woman without children.

Cosette had, therefore, made a doll of her sword.

The Thenardiess, on her part, approached the *yellow man.* "My husband is right," thought she, "it may be M. Laffitte. Some rich men are so odd."

She came and rested her elbow on the table at which he was sitting.

"Monsieur," said she—

At this word *Monsieur,* the man turned. The Thenardiess had called him before only "brave man" or "good man."

"You see, monsieur," she pursued, putting on her sweetest look, which was still more unendurable than her ferocious manner, "I am very willing the child should play, I am not opposed to it; it is well for once, because you are generous. But, you see, she is poor; she must work."

"The child is not yours, then?" asked the man.

"Oh, dear! no, monsieur! It is a little pauper that we have taken in through charity. A sort of imbecile child. She must have water on her brain. Her head is big, as you see. We do all we can for her, but we are not rich. We write in vain to her country; for six months we have had no answer! We think that her mother must be dead."

"Ah!" said the man, and he fell back into his reverie.

"This mother was no great thing," added the Thenardiess. "She abandoned her child."

During all this conversation Cosette, as if an instinct had warned her that they were talking about her, had not taken her eyes from the Thenardiess. She listened. She heard a few words here and there.

Meanwhile, the drinkers, all three-quarters drunk, were repeating their foul chorus with redoubled gayety. It was highly spiced with jests, in which the names of the Virgin and the child Jesus were often heard. The Thenardiess had gone to take her part in the hilarity. Cosette, under the table, was looking into the fire, which was reflected from her fixed eye; she was again rocking the sort of rag baby that she had made, and as she rocked it she sang in a low voice: "My mother is dead! my mother is dead! my mother is dead!"

At the repeated entreaties of the hostess the yellow man, "the millionaire," finally consented to sup.

"What will monsieur have?"

"Some bread and cheese," said the man.

"Decidedly, it is a beggar," thought the Thenardiess.

The revelers continued to sing their songs, and the child under the table also sang hers.

All at once Cosette stopped. She had just turned and

seen the little Thenardiers' doll, which they had forsaken for the cat and left on the floor a few steps from the kitchen table.

Then she let the bundled-up sword, that only half-satisfied her, fall, and ran her eyes slowly around the room. The Thenardiess was whispering to her husband and counting some money, Eponine and Azelma were playing with the cat, the travelers were eating or drinking or singing, nobody was looking at her. She had not a moment to lose. She crept out from under the table on her hands and knees, made sure once more that nobody was watching her, then darted quickly to the doll and seized it. An instant afterward she was at her place, seated, motionless, only turned in such a way as to keep the doll that she held in her arms in the shadow. The happiness of playing with a doll was so rare to her that it had all the violence of rapture.

Nobody had seen her except the traveler, who was slowly eating his meagre supper.

This joy lasted for nearly a quarter of an hour.

But, in spite of Cosette's precautions, she did not perceive that one of the doll's feet stuck out and that the fire of the fireplace lighted it up very vividly. This rosy and luminous foot which protruded from the shadow suddenly caught Azelma's eye, and she said to Eponine: "Oh, sister!"

The two little girls stopped, stupefied. Cosette had dared to take the doll.

Eponine got up, and without letting go of the cat went to her mother and began to pull at her skirt.

"Let me alone," said the mother; "what do you want?"

"Mother," said the child, "look there."

And she pointed at Cosette.

Cosette, wholly absorbed in the ecstasy of her possession, saw and heard nothing else.

The face of the Thenardiess assumed the peculiar expression which is composed of the terrible mingled with the commonplace, and which has given this class of women the name of furies.

This time wounded pride exasperated her anger still more. Cosette had leaped over all barriers. Cosette had laid her hands upon the doll of "those young ladies." A

czarina who had seen a muzhik trying on the grand cordon of her imperial son would have had the same expression.

She cried with a voice harsh with indignation: "Cosette!"

Cosette shuddered as if the earth had quaked beneath her. She turned around.

"Cosette!" repeated the Thenardiess.

Cosette took the doll and placed it gently on the floor with a kind of veneration mingled with despair. Then, without taking away her eyes, she joined her hands, and, what is frightful to tell in a child of that age, she wrung them; then, what none of the emotions of the day had drawn from her, neither the run in the wood nor the weight of the bucket of water, nor the loss of the money, nor the sight of the cowhide, nor even the stern words she had heard from the Thenardiess, she burst into tears. She sobbed.

Meanwhile the traveler rose.

"What is the matter?" said he to the Thenardiess.

"Don't you see?" said the Thenardiess, pointing with her finger to the *corpus delicti* lying at Cosette's feet.

"Well, what is that?" said the man.

"That beggar," answered the Thenardiess, "has dared to touch the children's doll."

"All this noise about that?" said the man. "Well, what if she did play with the doll?"

"She has touched it with her dirty hands!" continued the Thenardiess, "with her horrid hands!"

Here Cosette redoubled her sobs.

"Be still!" cried the Thenardiess.

The man walked straight to the street door, opened it, and went out.

As soon as he had gone, the Thenardiess profited by his absence to give Cosette, under the table, a severe kick, which made the child shriek.

The door opened again, and the man reappeared, holding in his hands the fabulous doll of which we have spoken, and which had been the admiration of all the youngsters of the village since morning; he stood it up before Cosette, saying: "Here, this is for you."

It is probable that during the time he had been there —more than an hour—in the midst of his reverie, he had caught confused glimpses of this toy-shop, lighted up

with lamps and candles so splendidly that it shone through the bar-room window like an illumination.

Cosette raised her eyes; she saw the man approach her with that doll as she would have seen the sun approach; she heard those astounding words: "This is for you." She looked at him, she looked at the doll, then she drew back slowly, and went and hid as far as she could under the table in the corner of the room.

She wept no more, she cried no more, she had the appearance of no longer daring to breathe.

The Thenardiess, Eponine, and Azelma were so many statues. Even the drinkers stopped. There was a solemn silence in the whole bar-room.

The Thenardiess, petrified and mute, recommenced her conjectures anew: "What is this old fellow? Is he a pauper? Is he a millionaire? Perhaps he's both—that is, a robber."

The face of the husband Thenardier presented that expressive wrinkle which marks the human countenance whenever the dominant instinct appears in it with all its brutal power. The innkeeper contemplated by turns the doll and the traveler; he seemed to be scenting this man as he would have scented a bag of money. He approached his wife and whispered to her: "That machine cost at least thirty francs. No nonsense. Down on your knees before the man!"

Coarse natures have this in common with artless natures —that they have no transitions.

"Well, Cosette," said the Thenardiess, in a voice which was meant to be sweet, and which was entirely composed of the sour honey of vicious women, "ain't you going to take your doll?"

Cosette ventured to come out of her hole.

"My little Cosette," said Thenardier, with a caressing air, "monsieur gives you a doll. Take it. It is yours."

Cosette looked upon the wonderful doll with a sort of terror. Her face was still flooded with tears, but her eyes began to fill, like the sky in the breaking of the dawn, with strange radiations of joy. What she experienced at that moment was almost like what she would have felt if some one had said to her suddenly: "Little girl, you are queen of France."

It seemed to her that if she touched that doll thunder would spring forth from it.

Which was true to some extent, for she thought that the Thenardiess would scold and beat her.

However, the attraction overcame her. She finally approached, and timidly murmured, turning toward the Thenardiess: "Can I, madame?"

No expression can describe her look, at once full of despair, dismay, and transport.

"Good Lord!" said the Thenardiess, "it is yours. Since monsieur gives it to you."

"Is it true, is it true, monsieur?" said Cosette. "Is the lady for me?"

The stranger appeared to have his eyes full of tears. He seemed to be at that stage of emotion in which one does not speak for fear of weeping. He nodded assent to Cosette, and put the hand of "the lady" in her little hand.

Cosette withdrew her hand hastily, as if that of "the lady" burned her, and looked down at the floor. We are compelled to add that at that instant she thrust out her tongue enormously. All at once she turned and seized the doll eagerly.

"I will call her Catherine," said she.

It was a strange moment when Cosette's rags met and pressed against the ribbons and the fresh pink muslins of the doll.

"Madame," said she, "may I put her in a chair?"

"Yes, my child," answered the Thenardiess.

It was Eponine and Azelma now who looked upon Cosette with envy.

Cosette placed Catherine in a chair, then sat down on the floor before her, and remained motionless, without saying a word, in the attitude of contemplation.

"Why don't you play, Cosette?" said the stranger.

"Oh! I am playing," answered the child.

This stranger, this unknown man, who seemed like a visit from Providence to Cosette, was at that moment the being which the Thenardiess hated more than aught else in the world. However, she was compelled to restrain herself. Her emotions were more than she could endure, accustomed as she was to dissimulation, by endeavoring to

copy her husband in all her actions. She sent her daughters to bed immediately, then asked the yellow man's permission to send Cosette to bed—"who is very tired to-day," added she, with a motherly air. Cosette went to bed holding Catherine in her arms.

The Thenardiess went, time to time, to the other end of the room, where her husband was, "to soothe her soul," she said. She exchanged a few words with him, which were the more furious that she did not dare to speak them aloud:

"The old fool! What has he got into his head to come here to disturb us? to want that little monster to play? to give her dolls? to give 40-franc dolls to a slut that I wouldn't give 40 sous for? A little more and he would say your majesty to her, as they do to the Duchess of Berry! Is he in his senses? He must be crazy, the strange old fellow!"

"Why? It is very simple," replied Thenardier. "It amuses him. It amuses you for the girl to work; it amuses him for her to play. He has the right to do it. A traveler can do as he likes if he pays for it. If this old fellow is a philanthropist what is that to you? If he is crazy it don't concern you. What do you interfere for as long as he has money?"

Language of a master and reasoning of an innkeeper which neither in one case nor the other admits of reply.

The man had leaned his elbows on the table and resumed his attitude of reverie. All the other travelers, pedlers, and wagoners had drawn back a little and sung no more. They looked upon him from a distance with a sort of respectful fear. This solitary man, so poorly clad, who took 5-franc pieces from his pocket with so much indifference, and who lavished gigantic dolls on little brats in wooden shoes, was certainly a magnificent and formidable good man.

Several hours passed away. The midnight mass was said, the revel was finished, the drinkers had gone, the house was closed, the room was deserted, the fire had gone out, the stranger still remained in the same place and in the same posture. From time to time he changed the elbow on which he rested. That was all. He had not spoken a word since Cosette was gone.

The Thenardiers alone out of propriety and curiosity had remained in the room.

"Is he going to spend the night like this?" grumbled the Thenardiess. When the clock struck two in the morning she acknowledged herself beaten, and said to her husband: "I am going to bed, you may do as you like." The husband sat down at a table in a corner, lighted a candle and began to read the "Courier Français."

A good hour passed thus. The worthy innkeeper had read the "Courier Français" at least three times from the date of the number to the name of the printer. The stranger did not stir.

Thenardier moved, coughed, spit, blew his nose, and creaked his chair. The man did not stir. "Is he asleep?" thought Thenardier. The man was not asleep, but nothing could arouse him.

Finally Thenardier took off his cap, approached softly, and ventured to say: "Is monsieur not going to repose?"

Not going to bed would have seemed to him too much and too familiar. To repose implied luxury, and there was respect in it. Such words have the mysterious and wonderful property of swelling the bill in the morning. A room in which you go to bed costs twenty sous; a room in which you repose costs twenty francs.

"Yes," said the stranger, "you are right. Where is your stable?"

"Monsieur," said Thenardier, with a smile, "I will conduct monsieur."

He took the candle, the man took his bundle and his staff, and Thenardier led him into a room on the first floor, which was very showy, furnished all in mahogany, with a high-post bedstead and red calico curtains.

"What is this?" said the traveler.

"It is properly our bridal chamber," said the innkeeper. "We occupy another like this, my spouse and I; this is not open more than three or four times in a year."

"I should have liked the stable as well," said the man, bluntly.

Thenardier did not appear to hear this not very civil answer.

He lighted two entirely new wax candles, which were displayed upon the mantel; a good fire was blazing in the

fireplace. There was on the mantel, under a glass case, a woman's head-dress of silver thread and orange-flowers.

"What is this?" said the stranger.

"Monsieur," said Thenardier, "it is my wife's bridal cap."

The traveler looked at the object with a look which seemed to say: "There was a moment, then, when this monster was a virgin."

Thenardier lied, however. When he hired this shanty to turn it into a chop-house, he found the room thus furnished, and bought this furniture, and purchased at second-hand these orange-flowers, thinking that this would cast a gracious light over "his spouse," and that the house would derive from them what the English call respectability.

When the traveler turned again the host had disappeared. Thenardier had discreetly taken himself out of the way without daring to say good-night, not desiring to treat with a disrespectful cordiality a man whom he proposed to skin royally in the morning.

The innkeeper retired to his room; his wife was in bed, but not asleep. When she heard her husband's step she turned toward him, and said: "You know that I am going to kick Cosette out of doors to-morrow!"

Thenardier coolly answered: "You are, indeed!"

They exchanged no further words, and in a few moments their candle was blown out.

For his part, the traveler had put his staff and bundle in a corner. The host gone, he sat down in an arm-chair, and remained some time thinking. Then he drew off his shoes, took one of the two candles, blew out the other, pushed open the door, and went out of the room, looking about him as if he were searching for something. He passed through a hall, and came to the stairway. There he heard a very soft little sound, which resembled the breathing of a child. Guided by this sound he came to a sort of triangular nook built under the stairs, or, rather, formed by the staircase itself. This hole was nothing but the space beneath the stairs. There, among all sorts of old baskets and old rubbish, in the dust and among the cobwebs, was a bed; if a mattress so full of holes as to show the straw, and a covering so full of holes as to

show the mattress, can be called a bed. There were no sheets. This was placed on the floor immediately on the tiles. In this bed Cosette was sleeping.

The man approached and looked at her.

Cosette was sleeping soundly; she was dressed. In the winter she did not undress on account of the cold. She held the doll clasped in her arms; its large, open eyes shone in the obscurity. From time to time she heaved a deep sigh, as if she were about to wake, and she hugged the doll almost convulsively. There was only one of her wooden shoes at the side of her bed. An open door near Cosette's nook disclosed a large, dark room. The stranger entered. At the further end, through a glass window, he perceived two little beds with very white spreads. They were those of Azelma and Eponine. Half hid behind those beds was a willow cradle without curtains, in which the little boy who had cried all the evening was sleeping.

The stranger conjectured that this room communicated with that of the Thenardiers. He was about to withdraw when his eyes fell upon the fireplace—one of those huge tavern fireplaces where there is always so little fire, when there is a fire, and which are so cold to look upon. In this one there was no fire, there was not even any ashes. What there was, however, attracted the traveler's attention. It was two little children's shoes, of coquettish shape and of different sizes. The traveler remembered the graceful and immemorial custom of children putting their shoes in the fireplace on Christmas night to wait there in the darkness in expectation of some shining gift from their good fairy. Eponine and Azelma had taken good care not to forget this, and each had put one of her shoes in the fireplace.

The traveler bent over them.

The fairy—that is to say, the mother—had already made her visit, and shining in each shoe was a beautiful new ten-sou piece.

The man rose up and was on the point of going away, when he perceived further along, by itself, in the darkest corner of the fireplace, another object. He looked and recognized a shoe, a horrid wooden shoe of the clumsiest sort, half broken and covered with ashes and dried mud. It was Cosette's shoe. Cosette, with that touching con-

fidence of childhood, which can always be deceived without ever being discouraged, had also placed her shoe in the fireplace.

What a sublime and sweet thing is hope in a child who has never known anything but despair!

There was nothing in this wooden shoe.

The stranger fumbled in his waistcoat, bent over and dropped into Cosette's shoe a gold louis.

Then he went back to his room with stealthy tread.

IX

THENARDIER MANOEUVRING

ON the following morning, at least two hours before day, Thenardier, seated at a table in the bar-room, a candle by his side, with pen in hand, was making out the bill of the traveler in the yellow coat.

His wife was standing, half-bent, over him, following him with her eyes. Not a word passed between them. It was, on one side, a profound meditation, on the other that religious admiration with which we observe a marvel of the human mind spring up and expand. A noise was heard in the house; it was the Lark sweeping the stairs.

After a good quarter of an hour and some erasures Thenardier produced this masterpiece:

BILL OF MONSIEUR IN NO. 1

	Francs
Supper,	3
Room,	10
Candle,	5
Fire,	4
Service,	1
Total,	23

Service was written *servisse*.

"Twenty-three francs!" exclaimed the woman, with an enthusiasm which was mingled with some hesitation.

Like all great artists, Thenardier was not satisfied.

"Pooh!" said he.

It was the accent of Castlereagh drawing up for the congress of Vienna the bill which France was to pay.

"M. Thenardier, you are right, he deserves it," murmured the woman, thinking of the doll given to Cosette in the presence of her daughters; "it is right! but it's too much. He won't pay it."

Thenardier put on his cold laugh, and said: "He will pay it."

This laugh was the highest sign of certainty and authority. What was thus said must be. The woman did not insist. She began to arrange the tables; the husband walked back and forth in the room. A moment after he added: "I owe, at least, 1,500 francs."

He seated himself thoughtfully in the chimney corner, his feet in the warm ashes.

"Ah, ha!" replied the woman, "you don't forget that I kick Cosette out of the house to-day? The monster! it tears my vitals to see her with her doll! I would rather marry Louis XVIII than keep her in the house another day!"

Thenardier lighted his pipe and answered between two puffs: "You'll give the bill to the man."

Then he went out.

He was scarcely out of the room when the traveler came in.

Thenardier reappeared immediately behind him, and remained motionless in the half-open door, visible only to his wife.

The yellow man carried his staff and bundle in his hand.

"Up so soon!" said the Thenardiess; "is monsieur going to leave us already?"

While speaking, she turned the bill in her hand with an embarrassed look, and made creases in it with her nails. Her hard face exhibited a shade of timidity and doubt that was not habitual.

To present such a bill to a man who had so perfectly the appearance of "a pauper" seemed too awkward to her.

The traveler appeared pre-occupied and absent-minded.

He answered: "Yes, madame, I am going away."

"Monsieur, then, had no business at Montfermeil," replied she.

"No, I am passing through; that is all. Madame," added he, "what do I owe?"

The Thenardiess, without answering, handed him the folded bill.

The man unfolded the paper and looked at it; but his thoughts were evidently elsewhere.

"Madame," replied he, "do you do a good business in Montfermeil?"

"So, so, monsieur," answered the Thenardiess, stupefied at seeing no other explosion.

She continued in a mournful and lamenting strain: "Oh! monsieur, the times are very hard, and then we have so few rich people around here! It is a very little place, you see. If we only had rich travelers now and then, like monsieur! We have so many expenses! Why, that little girl eats us out of house and home."

"What little girl?"

"Why, the little girl you know! Cosette! the Lark, as they call her about here!"

"Ah!" said the man.

She continued: "How stupid these peasants are with their nicknames! She looks more like a bat than a lark. You see, monsieur, we don't ask charity, but we are not able to give it. We make nothing, and have a great deal to pay. The license, the excise, the doors and windows, the tax on everything! Monsieur knows that the government demands a deal of money. And then I have my own girls. I have nothing to spend on other people's children."

The man replied in a voice which he endeavored to render indifferent, and in which there was a slight tremulousness.

"Suppose you were relieved of her?"

"Who? Cosette?"

"Yes."

The red and violent face of the woman became illumined with a hideous expression.

"Ah, monsieur! my good monsieur! take her, keep her, take her away, carry her off, sugar her, stuff her, drink her, eat her, and be blessed by the holy virgin and all the saints in paradise!"

"Agreed!"

"Really! you will take her away?"

"I will."

"Immediately?"

"Immediately. Call the child."

"Cosette?" cried the Thenardiess.

"In the meantime," continued the man, "I will pay my bill. How much is it?"

He cast a glance at the bill, and could not repress a movement of surprise.

"Twenty-three francs?"

He looked at the hostess and repeated: "Twenty-three francs?"

There was, in the pronunciation of these two sentences, thus repeated, the accent which lies between the point of exclamation and the point of interrogation.

The Thenardiess had had time to prepare herself for the shock. She replied, with assurance: "Yes, of course, monsieur! it is twenty-three francs."

The stranger placed five 5-franc pieces upon the table.

"Go for the little girl," said he.

At this moment Thenardier advanced into the middle of the room and said: "Monsieur owes twenty-six sous."

"Twenty-six sous!" exclaimed the woman.

"Twenty sous for the room," continued Thenardier coldly, "and six for supper. As to the little girl, I must have some talk with monsieur about that. Leave us, wife."

The Thenardiess was dazzled by one of those unexpected flashes which emanate from talent. She felt that the great actor had entered upon the scene, answered not a word and went out.

As soon as they were alone Thenardier offered the traveler a chair. The traveler sat down, but Thenardier remained standing, and his face assumed a singular expression of good-nature and simplicity.

"Monsieur," said he, "listen; I must say that I adore this child."

The stranger looked at him steadily.

"What child?"

Thenardier continued: "How strangely we become attached! What is all this silver? Take back your money. This child I adore."

"Who is that?" asked the stranger.

"Oh, our little Cosette! And you wish to take her away from us? Indeed, I speak frankly, as true as you are an honorable man, I can not consent to it. I should miss her.

I have had her since she was very small. It is true she costs us money; it is true she has her faults; it is true we are not rich; it is true I paid 400 francs for medicines at one time when she was sick. But we must do something for God. She has neither father nor mother; I have brought her up. I have bread enough for her and for myself. In fact, I must keep this child. You understand, we have affections; I am a good beast, myself. I do not reason; I love this little girl, my wife is hasty, but she loves her also. You see, she is like our own child. I feel the need of her prattle in the house."

The stranger was looking at him steadily all the while. He continued: "Pardon me, excuse me, monsieur, but one does not give his child like that to a traveler. Isn't it true that I am right? After that I don't say—you are rich and have the appearance of a very fine man—if it is for her advantage—but I must know about it. You understand? On the supposition that I should let her go and sacrifice my own feelings, I should want to know where she is going. I would not want to lose sight of her, I should know who she was with that I might come and see her now and then, and that she might know that her good foster-father was still watching over her. Finally, there are things which are not possible. I do not know even your name. If you should take her away I should say, alas for the little Lark, where has she gone? I must, at least, see some poor rag of paper, a bit of passport, something."

The stranger, without removing from him this gaze which went, so to speak, to the bottom of his conscience, answered in a severe and firm tone: "M. Thenardier, people do not take a passport to come five leagues from Paris. If I take Cosette, I take her, that is all. You will not know my name, you will not know my abode, you will not know where she goes, and my intention is that she shall never see you again in her life. Do you agree to that? Yes or no?"

As demons and genii recognize by certain signs the presence of a superior God, Thenardier comprehended that he had to deal with one who was very powerful. It came like an intuition; he understood it with his clear and quick sagacity; although, during the evening, he had been

drinking with the wagoners, smoking and singing bawdy songs, still he was observing the stranger all the while, watching him like a cat and studying like a mathematician. He had been observing him on his own account, for pleasure and by instinct, and at the same time lying in wait as if he had been paid for it. Not a gesture, not a movement of the man in the yellow coat had escaped him. Before even the stranger had so clearly shown his interest in Cosette Thenardier had divined it. He had surprised the searching glances of the old man constantly returning to the child. Why this interest? What was this man? Why, with so much money in his purse, this miserable dress? These were questions which he put to himself without being able to answer them, and they irritated him. He had been thinking it over all night. This could not be Cosette's father. Was it a grandfather? Then why did he not make himself known at once? When a man has a right he shows it. This man evidently had no right to Cosette. Then who was he? Thenardier was lost in conjectures. He caught glimpses of everything, but saw nothing. However it might be, when he commenced the conversation with this man, sure that there was a secret in all this, sure that the man had an interest in remaining unknown, he felt himself strong; at the stranger's clear and firm answer, when he saw that this mysterious personage was mysterious and nothing more, he felt weak. He was expecting nothing of the kind. His conjectures were put to flight. He rallied his ideas. He weighed all in a second. Thenardier was one of those men who comprehend a situation at a glance. He decided that this was the moment to advance straightforward and swiftly. He did what great captains do at that decisive instant which they alone can recognize; he unmasked his battery at once.

"Monsieur," said he, "I must have 1,500 francs."

The stranger took from his side-pocket an old black leather pocket-book, opened it, and drew forth three bank bills, which he placed upon the table. He then rested his large thumb on these bills, and said to the tavern-keeper: "Bring Cosette."

While this was going on what was Cosette doing?

Cosette, as soon as she awoke, had run to her wooden shoe. She had found the gold piece in it. It was not a

napoleon, but one of those new twenty-franc pieces of the Restoration, on the face of which the little Prussian queue had replaced the laurel crown. Cosette was dazzled. Her destiny began to intoxicate her. She did not know that it was a piece of gold; she had never seen one before; she hastily concealed it in her pocket as if she had stolen it. Nevertheless, she felt it boded good to her. She divined whence the gift came, but she experienced a joy that was filled with awe. She was gratified; she was, moreover, stupefied. Such magnificent and beautiful things seemed unreal to her. The doll made her afraid, the gold piece made her afraid. She trembled with wonder before these magnificences. The stranger himself did not make her afraid. On the contrary, he reassured her. Since the previous evening, amid all her astonishment and in her sleep, she was thinking in her little child's mind of this man who had such an old and poor and sad appearance, and who was so rich and so kind. Since she had met this good man in the wood it seemed as though all things were changed about her. Cosette, less happy than the smallest swallow of the sky, had never known what it was to take refuge under a mother's wing. For five years—that is to say, as far back as she could remember—the poor child had shivered and shuddered. She had always been naked under the biting north wind of misfortune, and now it seemed to her that she was clothed. Before her soul was cold, now it was warm. Cosette was no longer afraid of the Thenardiers; she was no longer alone; she had somebody to look to.

She hurriedly set herself to her morning task. This louis, which she had placed in the same pocket of her apron from which the fifteen-sou piece had fallen the night before, distracted her attention from her work. She did not dare to touch it, but she spent five minutes at a time contemplating it, and, we must confess, with her tongue thrust out. While sweeping the stairs she stopped and stood there motionless, forgetting her broom and the whole world besides, occupied in looking at this shining star at the bottom of her pocket.

It was in one of these reveries that the Thenardiess found her.

At the command of her husband she had gone to look

for her. Wonderful to tell, she did not give her a slap nor even call her a hard name.

"Cosette," she said, almost gently, "come quick."

An instant after Cosette entered the bar-room.

The stranger took the bundle he had brought and untied it. This bundle contained a little woolen frock, an apron, a coarse cotton undergarment, a petticoat, a scarf, woolen stockings, and shoes—a complete dress for a girl of seven years. It was all in black."

"My child," said the man, "take this and go and dress yourself quick."

The day was breaking when those of the inhabitants of Montfermeil who were beginning to open their doors saw pass on the road to Paris a poorly clad good man leading a little girl dressed in mourning, who had a pink doll in her arms. They were going toward Livry.

It was the stranger and Cosette.

No one recognized the man; as Cosette was not now in tatters, few recognized her.

Cosette was going away. With whom? She was ignorant. Where? She knew not. All she understood was that she was leaving behind the Thenardier chop-house. Nobody had thought of bidding her good-by, nor had she of bidding good-by to anybody. She went out from that house hated and hating.

Poor, gentle being, whose heart had only been crushed hitherto.

Cosette walked seriously along, opening her large eyes and looking at the sky. She had put her louis in the pocket of her new apron. From time to time she bent over and cast a glance at it and then looked at the good man. She felt somewhat as if she were near God.

X

WHO SEEKS THE BEST MAY FIND THE WORST

THE Thenardiess, according to her custom, had left her husband alone. She was expecting great events. When the man and Cosette were gone, Thenardier, after a good quarter of an hour, took her aside and showed her the 1,500 francs.

"What's that?" said she.

It was the first time since the beginning of their housekeeping that she had dared to criticise the act of her master.

He felt the blow.

"True—you are right," said he; "I am a fool. Give me my hat."

He folded the three bank-bills, thrust them into his pocket and started in all haste, but he missed the direction and took the road to the right. Some neighbors of whom he inquired put him on the track; the Lark and the man had been seen to go in the direction of Livry. He followed this indication, walking rapidly and talking to himself.

"This man is, evidently, a millionaire dressed in yellow, and, as for me, I am a brute. He first gave 20 sous, then 5 francs, then 50 francs, then 1,500 francs, all so readily. He would have given 15,000 francs. But I shall catch him."

And, then, this bundle of clothes made ready beforehand for the little girl; all that was strange—there was a good deal of mystery under it. When one gets hold of a mystery he does not let go of it. The secrets of the rich are sponges full of gold; a man ought to know how to squeeze them. All these thoughts were whirling in his brain. "I am a brute," said he.

On leaving Montfermeil and reaching the turn made by the road to Livry, the route may be seen for a long distance on the plateau. On reaching this point he counted on being able to see the man and the little girl. He looked as far as his eye could reach, but could see nothing. He inquired again. In the meanwhile he was losing time. The passers-by told him that the man and child whom he sought had traveled toward the wood in the direction of Gagny. He hastened in this direction.

They had the start of him, but a child walks slowly and he went rapidly. And then the country was well known to him.

Suddenly he stopped and struck his forehead, like a man who has forgotten the main thing and who thinks of retracing his steps.

"I ought to have taken my gun!" said he.

Thenardier was one of those double natures who sometimes appear among us without our knowledge and disappear without ever being known, because destiny has shown us but one side of them. It is the fate of many men to live thus half submerged. In a quiet, ordinary situation, Thenardier had all that is necessary to make—we do not say to be—what passes for an honest tradesman, a good citizen. At the same time, under certain circumstances, under the operation of certain occurrences exciting his baser nature, he had in him all that was necessary to be a villain. He was a shopkeeper in whom lay hidden a monster. Satan ought for a moment to have squatted in some corner of the hole in which Thenardier lived and studied this hideous masterpiece.

After hesitating an instant: "Bah!" thought he, "they would have time to escape!"

And he continued on his way, going rapidly forward and almost as if he were certain, with the sagacity of the fox scenting a flock of partridges.

In fact, when he had passed the ponds and crossed obliquely the large meadow at the right of the Avenue de Bellevue, as he reached the grassy path which nearly encircles the hill and which covers the arch of the old aqueduct of the Abbey of Chelles, he perceived above a bush the hat on which he had already built so many conjectures. It was the man's hat. The bushes were low. Thenardier perceived that the man and Cosette were seated there. The child could not be seen, she was so short, but he could see the head of the doll.

Thenardier was not deceived. The man had sat down there to give Cosette a little rest. The chop-house keeper turned aside the bushes, and suddenly appeared before the eyes of those whom he sought.

"Pardon me, excuse me, monsieur," said he, all out of breath, "but here are your 1,500 francs."

So saying, he held out the three bank-bills to the stranger.

The man raised his eyes: "What does that mean?"

Thenardier answered respectfully: "Monsieur, that means that I take back Cosette."

Cosette shuddered, and hugged close to the good man.

He answered, looking Thenardier straight in the

eye and spacing his syllables: "You — take — back— Cosette?"

"Yes, monsieur, I take her back. I tell you I have reflected. Indeed, I haven't the right to give her to you. I am an honest man, you see. This little girl is not mine; she belongs to her mother. Her mother has confided her to me; I can only give her up to her mother. You will tell me: but her mother is dead. Well, in that case, I can only give up the child to a person who shall bring me a written order, signed by her mother, stating I should deliver the child to him. That is clear."

The man, without answering, felt in his pocket, and Thenardier saw the pocket-book containing the bank-bills reappear.

The tavern-keeper felt a thrill of joy.

"Good!" thought he; "hold on. He is going to corrupt me!"

Before opening the pocket-book, the traveler cast a look about him. The place was entirely deserted. There was not a soul either in the wood or in the valley. The man opened the pocket-book and drew from it, not the handful of bank-bills which Thenardier expected, but a little piece of paper, which he unfolded and presented open to the innkeeper, saying: "You are right. Read that!"

Thenardier took the paper and read.

M—— sur M——, March 25, 1823.

M. Thenardier:

You will deliver Cosette to the bearer. He will settle all small debts. I have the honor to salute you with consideration.

Fantine.

"You know that signature?" replied the man.

It was indeed the signature of Fantine. Thenardier recognized it.

There was nothing to say. He felt doubly enraged, enraged at being compelled to give up the bribe which he hoped for, and enraged at being beaten. The man added: "You can keep this paper as your receipt."

Thenardier retreated in good order.

"This signature is very well imitated," he grumbled between his teeth. "Well, so be it!"

Then he made a desperate effort.

"Monsieur," said he, "it is all right. Then you are the person. But you must settle 'all small debts.' There is a large amount due to me."

The man rose to his feet and said, at the same time snapping with his thumb and finger some dust from his threadbare sleeve: "M. Thenardier, in January the mother reckoned that she owed you 120 francs; you sent her in February a memorandum of 500 francs; you received 300 francs at the end of February and 300 at the beginning of March. There has since elapsed nine months, which, at 15 francs per month, the price agreed upon, amounts to 135 francs. You had received 100 francs in advance. There remain 35 francs due you. I have just given you 1,500 francs."

Thenardier felt what the wolf feels the moment when he finds himself seized and crushed by the steel jaws of the trap.

"What is this devil of a man?" thought he

He did what the wolf does; he gave a spring. Audacity had succeeded with him once already.

"Monsieur-I-don't-know-your-name," said he, resolutely, and putting aside this time all show of respect, "I shall take back Cosette or you must give me 1,000 crowns."

The stranger said, quietly: "Come, Cosette."

He took Cosette with his left hand and with his right picked up his staff, which was on the ground.

Thenardier noted the enormous size of the cudgel and the solitude of the place.

The man disappeared in the wood with the child, leaving the chop-house keeper motionless and nonplused.

As they walked away Thenardier observed his broad shoulders, a little rounded, and his big fists.

Then his eyes fell back upon his own puny arms and thin hands. "I must have been a fool indeed," thought he, "not to have brought my gun, as I was going on a hunt."

However, the innkeeper did not abandon the pursuit.

"I must know where he goes," said he, and he began to follow them at a distance. There remained two things in his possession, one a bitter mockery, the piece of paper signed "Fantine," and the other a consolation, the 1,500 francs.

The man was leading Cosette in the direction of Livry and Bondy. He was walking slowly, his head bent down in an attitude of reflection and sadness. The winter had bereft the wood of foliage, so that Thenardier did not lose sight of them, though remaining at a considerable distance behind. From time to time the man turned and looked to see if he were followed. Suddenly he perceived Thenardier. He at once entered a coppice with Cosette, and both disappeared from sight. "The devil!" said Thenardier, and he redoubled his pace.

The density of the thicket compelled him to approach them. When the man reached the thickest part of the wood he turned again. Thenardier had endeavored to conceal himself in the branches in vain; he could not prevent the man from seeing him. The man cast an uneasy glance at him, then shook his head and resumed his journey. The innkeeper again took up the pursuit. They walked thus 200 or 300 paces. Suddenly the man turned again. He perceived the innkeeper. This time he looked at him so forbiddingly that Thenardier judged it "unprofitable" to go further. Thenardier went home.

XI

NUMBER 9430 COMES UP AGAIN AND COSETTE DRAWS IT

JEAN VALJEAN was not dead.

When he fell into the sea, or, rather, when he threw himself into it, he was, as we have seen, free from his irons. He swam under water to a ship at anchor to which a boat was fastened.

He found means to conceal himself in this boat until evening. At night he betook himself again to the water, and reached the land a short distance from Cape Brun.

There, as he did not lack for money, he could procure clothes. A little public-house in the environs of Balaguier was then the place which supplied clothing for escaped convicts, a lucrative business. Then Jean Valjean, like all those joyless fugitives who are endeavoring to throw off the track the spy of the law and social fatality, followed an obscure and wandering path. He found an asylum first in Pradeaux, near Beausset. Then he went

toward Grand Villard, near Briançon, in the Hautes Alpes. Groping and restless flight, threading the mazes of the mole, whose windings are unknown. There were afterward found some traces of his passage in Ain, on the territory of Civrieux; in the Pyrenees at Accons, at a place called the Grange-de-Domecq, near the hamlet of Chavailles, and in the environs of Périgueux, at Bruines, a canton of Chapelle Gonaguet. He finally reached Paris. We have seen him at Montfermeil.

His first care on reaching Paris had been to purchase a mourning dress for a little girl of seven years, then to procure lodgings. That done, he had gone to Montfermeil.

It will be remembered that, at the time of his former escape, or near that time, he had made a mysterious journey, of which justice had had some glimpse.

Moreover, he was believed to be dead, and that thickened the obscurity which surrounded him. At Paris there fell into his hands a paper which chronicled the fact. He felt reassured and almost as much at peace as if he really had been dead.

On the evening of the same day that Jean Valjean had rescued Cosette from the clutches of the Thenardiers he entered Paris again. He entered the city at nightfall with the child by the Barrière de Monceaux. There he took a cabriolet, which carried him as far as the esplanade of the observatory. There he got out, paid the driver, took Cosette by the hand, and both, in the darkness of the night, through the deserted streets in the vicinity of l'Ourcine and la Glaciere, walked toward the Boulevard de l'Hôpital.

The day had been strange and full of emotion for Cosette; they had eaten behind hedges bread and cheese bought in isolated chop-houses; they had often changed carriages and had traveled short distances on foot. She did not complain, but she was tired, and Jean Valjean perceived it by her pulling more heavily at his hand while walking. He took her in his arms; Cosette, without letting go of Catherine, laid her head on Jean Valjean's shoulder and went to sleep.

BOOK FOURTH—THE OLD GORBEAU HOUSE

I

M. GORBEAU

FORTY years ago, the solitary pedestrian who ventured into the unknown regions of La Salpêtrière, and went up along the boulevard as far as the Barrière d'Italie, reached certain points where it might be said that Paris disappeared. It was no longer a solitude, for there were people passing; it was not the country, for there were houses and streets; it was not a city, the streets had ruts in them, like the highways, and grass grew along their borders; it was not a village, the houses were too lofty. What was it, then? It was an inhabited place where there was nobody; it was a desert place where there was somebody; it was a boulevard of the great city, a street of Paris, wilder at night than a forest, and gloomier by day than a graveyard.

It was the old quarter of the horse market.

Our pedestrian, if he trusted himself beyond the four tumbling walls of this horse market, if willing to go even further than the Rue de Petit Banquier, leaving on his right a courtyard shut in by lofty walls; then a meadow studded with stacks of tanbark that looked like the gigantic beaver dams; then an inclosure half filled with lumber and piles of logs, sawdust, and shavings, from the top of which a huge dog was baying; then a long, low, ruined wall, with a small, dark-colored and decrepit gate in it, covered with moss, which was full of flowers in springtime; then, in the loneliest spot, a frightful broken-down structure, on which could be read in large letters: POST NO BILLS; this bold promenader, we say, would reach the corner of the Rue des Vignes-St.-Marcel, a latitude not much explored. There, near a manufactory and between two garden-walls, could be seen, at the time of which we speak, an old ruined dwelling that, at first sight, seemed as small as a cottage, yet was, in reality, as vast as a cathe-

dral. It stood with its gable end toward the highway, and hence its apparent diminutiveness. Nearly the whole house was hidden. Only the door and one window could be seen.

This old dwelling had but one story.

On examining it, the peculiarity that first struck the beholder was that the door could never have been anything but the door of a hovel, while the window, had it been cut in free-stone and not in rough material, might have been the casement of a lordly residence.

The door was merely a collection of worm-eaten boards rudely tacked together with cross-pieces that looked like pieces of firewood clumsily split out. It opened directly on a steep staircase with high steps covered with mud, plaster, and dust, and of the same breadth as the door, and which seemed, from the street, to rise perpendicularly like a ladder, and disappear in the shadow between two walls. The top of the shapeless opening which this door closed upon was disguised by a narrow topscreen, in the middle of which had been sawed a three-cornered orifice that served both for skylight and ventilator when the door was shut. On the inside of the door a brush dipped in ink had, in a couple of strokes of the hand, traced the number 52, and above the screen the same brush had daubed the number 50, so that a newcomer would hesitate, asking: Where am I?

The top of the entrance says: at No. 50; the inside, however, replies No! at No. 52! The dust-colored rags that hung in guise of curtains about the three-cornered ventilator we will not attempt to describe.

The window was broad and of considerable height, with large panes in the sashes and provided with Venetian shutters; only the panes had received a variety of wounds which were at once concealed and made manifest by ingenious strips and bandages of paper, and the shutters were so broken and disjointed that they menaced the passers-by more than they shielded the occupants of the dwelling. The horizontal slats were lacking here and there, and had been very simply replaced with boards nailed across, so that what had been a Venetian in the first instance ended as a regular close shutter. This door with its dirty look, and this window with its decent though dilapidated appearance, seen thus in one and the same

building, produced the effect of two ragged beggars bound in the same direction and walking side by side, with different mien, under the same rags, one having always been a pauper, while the other had been a gentleman.

The staircase led up to a very spacious interior, which looked like a barn converted into a house. This structure had for its main channel of communication a long hall, on which there opened on either side apartments of different dimensions scarcely habitable, rather resembling booths than rooms. These chambers looked out upon the shapeless grounds of the neighborhood. Altogether, it was dark and dull and dreary, even melancholy and sepulchral, and it was penetrated either by the dim, cold rays of the sun, or by icy draughts, according to the situation of the cracks in the roof or in the door. One interesting and picturesque peculiarity of this kind of tenement is the monstrous size of the spiders.

To the left of the main door, on the boulevard, a small window that had been walled up formed a square niche some six feet from the ground, which was filled with stones that passing urchins had thrown into it.

A portion of this building has recently been pulled down, but what remains, at the present day, still conveys an idea of what it was. The structure, taken as a whole, is not more than 100 years old. One hundred years is youth to a church, but old age to a private mansion. It would seem that the dwelling of a man partakes of his brief existence, and the dwelling of God of His eternity.

The letter-carriers called the house Nos. 50-52; but it was known in the quarter as the Gorbeau House.

Let us see how it came by that title.

The "gatherers-up of unconsidered trifles," who collect anecdotes as the herbalist his simples, and prick the fleeting dates upon their memories with a pin, know that there lived in Paris, in the last century, about 1770, two attorneys of the Châtelet, one named Corbeau and the other Renard—two names anticipated by La Fontaine. The chance for a joke was altogether too fine a one to be let slip by the goodly company of lawyers' clerks. So, very soon, the galleries of the court-rooms rang with the following parody, in rather gouty verse:

"Maître Corbeau, sur un dossier perché,
Tenait dans son bec une saisie executoire;
Maître Renard, par l'odeur alléché,
Lui fit à peu près cette histoire:
'Hé! bonjour!' " etc.*

The two honest practitioners, annoyed by the shafts of wit, and rather disconcerted in their dignity by the roars of laughter that followed them, resolved to change their names, and, with that view, applied to the king. The petition was presented to Louis XV on the very day on which the Pope's nuncio and the Cardinal de La Roche-Aymon in the presence of his Majesty, devoutly kneeling, one on each side of Mme. du Barry, put her slippers on her naked feet as she was getting out of bed. The king, who was laughing, continued his laugh. He passed gayly from the two bishops to the two advocates, and absolved these limbs of the law from their names almost. It was granted to M. Corbeau, by the king's good pleasure, to add a flourish to the first letter of his name, thus making it Gorbeau; M. Reynard was less fortunate, as he only got permission to put a P before the R, which made the word Prenard,† a name no less appropriate than the first one.

Now, according to tradition, this M. Gorbeau was the proprietor of the structure Nos. 50-52 Boulevard de l'Hôpital. He was, likewise, the originator of the monumental window.

Hence, this building got its name of Gorbeau House.

Opposite Nos. 50-52 stands, among the shade-trees that line the boulevard, a tall elm, three-quarters dead, and almost directly in front of the Rue de la Barrière des Gobelins—a street, at that time, without houses, unpaved, bordered with scrubby trees, grass-grown or muddy, according to the season, and running squarely up to the wall encircling Paris. An odor of vitriol ascended in puffs from the roofs of a neighboring factory.

The Barrière was quite near. In 1823 the encircling wall yet existed.

---

* "Master Crow, on a document perched,
In his beak held a fat execution;
Master Fox, with his jaws well besmirched,
Thus spake up, to his neighbor's confusion:
'Good day! my fine fellow!' " quoth he, etc.

† Prenard—a grasping fellow.

This Barrière itself filled the mind with gloomy images. It was on the way to the Bicêtre. It was there that, under the Empire and the Restoration, condemned criminals reentered Paris on the day of their execution. It was there that, about the year 1829, was committed the mysterious assassination called "the murder of the Barrière de Fontainebleau," the perpetrators of which the authorities have never discovered—a sombre problem which has not yet been solved, a terrible enigma not yet unraveled. Go a few steps further and you find that fatal Rue Croulebarbe where Ulbach stabbed the goatherd girl of Ivry, in a thunderstorm, in the style of a melodrama. Still a few steps and you come to those detestable clipped elm-trees of the Barrière Saint-Jacques, that expedient of philanthropists to hide the scaffold, that pitiful and shameful Place de Grève of a cockney, shop-keeping society which recoils from capital punishment, yet dares neither to abolish it with lofty dignity nor to maintain it with firm authority.

Thirty-seven years ago, excepting this place, Saint-Jacques, which seemed foredoomed, and always was horrible, the gloomiest of all this gloomy boulevard was the spot, still so unattractive, where stood the old building Nos. 50-52.

The city dwelling-houses did not begin to start up there until some twenty-five years later. The place was repulsive. In addition to the melancholy thought that seized you there, you felt conscious of being between a La Salpêtrière, the cupola of which was in sight, and Bicêtre, the barrier of which was close by—that is to say, between the wicked folly of women and that of man. Far as the eye could reach there was nothing to be seen but the public shambles, the city wall, and here and there the side of a factory, resembling a barrack or a monastery; on all sides, miserable hovels and heaps of rubbish, old walls as black as widows' weeds, and new walls as white as winding-sheets; on all sides, parallel rows of trees, buildings in straight lines, low, flat structures, long, cold perspectives, and the gloomy sameness of right angles. Not a variation of the surface of the ground, not a caprice of architecture, not a curve. Altogether, it was chilly, regular, and hideous. Nothing stifles one like this perpetual symmetry. Symmetry is ennui, and ennui is the very essence of grief

and melancholy. Despair yawns. Something more terrible than a hell of suffering may be conceived; to wit, a hell of ennui. Were there such a hell in existence, this section of the Boulevard de l'Hôpital might well serve as the approach to it.

Then at nightfall, at the moment when the day is dying out, especially in winter, at that hour when the evening breeze tears from the elms their faded and withered leaves, when the gloom is deep, without a single star, or when the moon and the wind make openings in the clouds, this boulevard became positively terrifying. The dark outlines shrank together, and even lost themselves in the obscurity like fragments of the infinite. The passer-by could not keep from thinking of the innumerable bloody traditions of the spot. The solitude of this neighborhood in which so many crimes had been committed had something fearful about it. One felt presentiments of snares in this obscurity; all the confused outlines visible through the gloom were eyed suspiciously, and the oblong cavities between the trees seemed like graves. In the daytime it was ugly; in the evening it was dismal; at night it was ominous of evil. In summer, in the twilight, some old women might be seen seated here and there, under the elms, on benches made mouldy by the rain. These good old dames were addicted to begging.

In conclusion, this quarter, which was rather superannuated than ancient, from that time began to undergo a transformation. Thenceforth, whoever would see it must hasten. Each day some of its details wholly passed away. Now, as has been the case for twenty years past, the terminus of the Orleans railroad lies just outside of the old suburb and keeps it in movement. Wherever you may locate, in the outskirts of a capital, a railroad depot, it is the death of a suburb and the birth of a city. It would seem as though around these great centres of the activity of nations, at the rumbling of these mighty engines, at the snorting of these giant draught-horses of civilization, which devour coal and spout forth fire, the earth, teeming with germs of life, trembles and opens to swallow old dwellings of men and to bring forth new; old houses crumble, new houses spring up.

Since the depot of the Orleans railway invaded the

grounds of La Salpêtrière, the old narrow streets that adjoin the Fossés Saint Victor and the Jardin des Plantes are giving way, violently traversed, as they are, three or four times a day, by those streams of diligences, hacks, and omnibuses which, in course of time, push back the houses right and left; for there are things that sound strangely, and yet which are precisely correct; and, just as the remark is true, that in large cities the sun causes the fronts of houses looking south to vegetate and grow, so is it undeniable that the frequent passage of vehicles widens the streets. The symptoms of a new life are evident. In that old provincial quarter, and in its wildest corners, pavement is beginning to appear, sidewalks are springing up, and stretching to longer and longer distances, even in those parts where there are as yet no passers-by. One morning, a memorable morning in July, 1845, black kettles filled with bitumen were seen smoking there; on that day one could exclaim that civilization had reached the Rue de l'Ourcine, and that Paris had stepped across into the Faubourg St. Marceau.

II

A NEST FOR OWL AND WREN

BEFORE this Gorbeau tenement Jean Valjean stopped. Like the birds of prey, he had chosen this lonely place to make his nest.

He fumbled in his waistcoat and took from it a sort of night-key, opened the door, entered, then carefully closed it again and ascended the stairway, still carrying Cosette.

At the top of the stairway he drew from his pocket another key, with which he opened another door. The chamber which he entered and closed again immediately was a sort of garret, rather spacious, furnished only with a mattress spread on the floor, a table and a few chairs. A stove containing a fire, the coals of which were visible, stood in one corner. The street lamp of the boulevard shed a dim light through this poor interior. At the further extremity there was a little room containing a cot bed. On this Jean Valjean laid the child without waking her.

He struck a light with flint and steel and lit a candle, which, with his tinder-box, stood ready, beforehand, on

the table; and, as he had done on the preceding evening, he began to gaze upon Cosette with a look of ecstasy, in which the expression of goodness and tenderness went almost to the verge of insanity. The little girl, with that tranquil confidence which belongs only to extreme strength or extreme weakness, had fallen asleep without knowing with whom she was, and continued to slumber without knowing where she was.

Jean Valjean bent down and kissed the child's hand.

Nine months before he had kissed the hand of the mother, who also had just fallen asleep.

The same mournful, pious, agonizing feeling now filled his heart.

He knelt down by the bedside of Cosette.

It was broad daylight and yet the child slept on. A pale ray from the December sun struggled through the garret window and traced upon the ceiling long streaks of light and shade. Suddenly a carrier's wagon, heavily laden, trundled over the cobble-stones of the boulevard and shook the old building like the rumbling of a tempest, jarring it from cellar to roof-tree.

"Yes, madame!" cried Cosette, starting up out of sleep, "here I am! here I am!"

And she threw herself from the bed, her eyelids still half-closed with the weight of slumber, stretching out her hand toward the corner of the wall.

"Oh! what shall I do? Where is my broom?" said she.

By this time her eyes were fully open, and she saw the smiling face of Jean Valjean.

"Oh! yes—so it is!" said the child. "Good-morning, monsieur."

Children at once accept joy and happiness with quick familiarity, being themselves naturally all happiness and joy.

Cosette noticed Catherine at the foot of the bed, laid hold of her at once, and, playing the while, asked Jean Valjean a thousand questions. Where was she? Was Paris a big place? Was Mme. Thenardier really very far away? Wouldn't she come back again? etc. All at once she exclaimed: "How pretty it is here!"

It was a frightful hovel, but she felt free.

"Must I sweep?" she continued at length.

"Play!" replied Jean Valjean.

And thus the day passed by. Cosette, without troubling herself with trying to understand anything about it, was inexpressibly happy with her doll and her good friend.

III

TWO MISFORTUNES MINGLED MAKE HAPPINESS

THE dawn of the next day found Jean Valjean again near the bed of Cosette. He waited there, motionless, to see her wake.

Something new was entering his soul.

Jean Valjean had never loved anything. For twenty-five years he had been alone in the world. He had never been a father, lover, husband, or friend. At the galleys he was cross, sullen, abstinent, ignorant, and intractable. The heart of the old convict was full of freshness. His sister and her children had left in his memory only a vague and distant impression, which had finally almost entirely vanished. He had made every exertion to find them again, and, not succeeding, had forgotten them. Human nature is thus constituted. The other tender emotions of his youth, if any such he had, were lost in an abyss.

When he saw Cosette, when he had taken her, carried her away, and rescued her, he felt his heart moved. All that he had of feeling and affection was aroused and vehemently attracted toward this child. He would approach the bed where she slept, and would tremble there with delight; he felt inward yearnings, like a mother, and knew not what they were; for it is something very incomprehensible and very sweet, this grand and strange emotion of a heart in its first love.

Poor old heart, so young!

But, as he was fifty-five and Cosette was but eight years old, all that he might have felt of love in his entire life melted into a sort of ineffable radiance.

This was the second white vision he had seen. The bishop had caused the dawn of virtue on his horizon Cosette evoked the dawn of love.

The first few days rolled by amid this bewilderment.

On her part, Cosette, too, unconsciously underwent a change, poor little creature! She was so small when her

mother left her that she could not recollect her now. As all children do, like the young shoots of the vine that cling to everything, she had tried to love. She had not been able to succeed. Everybody had repelled her—the Thenardiers, their children, other children. She had loved the dog; it died, and after that no person and no thing would have aught to do with her. Mournful thing to tell, and one which we have already hinted, at the age of eight her heart was cold. This was not her fault; it was not the faculty of love that she lacked; alas! it was the possibility. And so, from the very first day, all that thought and felt in her began to love this kind old friend. She now felt sensations utterly unknown to her before—a sensation of budding and of growth.

Her kind friend no longer impressed her as old and poor. In her eyes Jean Valjean was handsome, just as the garret had seemed pretty.

Such are the effects of the aurora glow of childhood, youth and joy. The newness of earth and of life has something to do with it. Nothing is so charming as the ruddy tints that happiness can shed around a garret room. We all, in the course of our lives, have had our rose-colored sky-parlor.

Nature had placed a wide chasm—fifty years' interval of age—between Jean Valjean and Cosette. This chasm fate filled up. Fate abruptly brought together, and wedded with its resistless power, these two shattered lives, dissimilar in years, but similar in sorrow. The one, indeed, was the complement of the other. The instinct of Cosette sought for a father, as the instinct of Jean Valjean sought for a child. To meet was to find one another. In that mysterious moment, when their hands touched, they were welded together. When their two souls saw each other they recognized that they were mutually needed, and they closely embraced.

Taking the words in their most comprehensive and most absolute sense, it might be said that, separated from everything by the walls of the tomb, Jean Valjean was the husband bereaved, as Cosette was the orphan. This position made Jean Valjean become, in a celestial sense, the father of Cosette.

And, in truth, the mysterious impression produced upon

Cosette, in the depths of the woods at Chelles, by the hand of Jean Valjean grasping her own in the darkness, was not an illusion but a reality. The coming of this man and his participation in the destiny of this child had been the advent of God.

In the meanwhile, Jean Valjean had well chosen his hiding-place. He was there in a state of security that seemed to be complete.

The apartment with the side chamber, which he occupied with Cosette, was the one whose window looked out upon the boulevard. This window being the only one in the house, there was no neighbor's prying eye to fear either from that side or opposite.

The lower floor of Nos. 50-52 was a sort of dilapidated shed; it served as a sort of stable for market gardeners, and had no communication with the upper floor. It was separated from it by the flooring, which had neither stairway nor trap-door, and was, as it were, the diaphragm of the old building. The upper floor contained, as we have said, several rooms and a few lofts, only one of which was occupied—by an old woman, who was maid of all work to Jean Valjean. All the rest were uninhabited.

It was this old woman, honored with the title of landlady, but, in reality, intrusted with the functions of portress, who had rented him these lodgings on Christmas day. He had passed himself off to her as a gentleman of means, ruined by the Spanish bonds, who was going to live there with his granddaughter. He had paid her for six months in advance, and engaged the old dame to furnish the chamber and the little bedroom, as we have described them. This old woman it was who had kindled the fire in the stove and made everything ready for them on the evening of their arrival.

Weeks rolled by. These two beings led in that wretched shelter a happy life.

From the earliest dawn Cosette laughed, prattled, and sang. Children have their morning song, like birds.

Sometimes it happened that Jean Valjean would take her little red hand, all chapped and frost-bitten as it was, and kiss it. The poor child, accustomed only to blows, had no idea what this meant, and would draw back ashamed.

At times she grew serious and looked musingly at her

little black dress. Cosette was no longer in rags; she was in mourning. She was issuing from utter poverty and was entering upon life.

Jean Valjean had begun to teach her to read. Sometimes, while teaching the child to spell, he would remember that it was with the intention of accomplishing evil that he had learned to read in the galleys. This intention had now been changed into teaching a child to read. Then the old convict would smile with the pensive smile of angels.

He felt in this a preordination from on high, a volition of some one more than man, and he would lose himself in reverie. Good thoughts as well as bad have their abysses.

To teach Cosette to read, and to watch her playing, was nearly all Jean Valjean's life. And then he would talk to her about her mother and teach her to pray.

She called him *father,* and knew him by no other name.

He spent hours seeing her dress and undress her doll and listening to her song and prattle. From that time on life seemed full of interest to him, men seemed good and just; he no longer, in his thoughts, reproached any one with any wrong; he saw no reason, now, why he should not live to grow very old, since his child loved him. He looked forward to a long future illuminated by Cosette with charming light. The very best of us are not altogether exempt from some tinge of egotism. At times he thought, with a sort of quiet satisfaction, that she would be by no means handsome.

This is but a personal opinion; but, in order to express our idea thoroughly, at the point Jean Valjean had reached, when he began to love Cosette, it is not clear to us that he did not require this fresh supply of goodness to enable him to persevere in the right path. He had seen the wickedness of men and the misery of society under new aspects—aspects incomplete and, unfortunately, showing forth only one side of the truth—the lot of a woman summed up in Fantine, public authority personified in Javert; he had been sent back to the galleys this time for doing good; new waves of bitterness had overwhelmed him; disgust and weariness had once more resumed their sway; the recollection of the bishop, even, was perhaps almost eclipsed, sure to reappear afterward, lu-

minous and triumphant; yet, in fact, this blessed remembrance was growing feebler. Who knows that Jean Valjean was not on the point of becoming discouraged and falling back to evil ways? Love came and he again grew strong. Alas! he was no less feeble than Cosette. He protected her, and she gave strength to him. Thanks to him, she could walk upright in life; thanks to her, he could persist in virtuous deeds. He was the support of this child, and this child was his prop and staff. Oh, divine and unfathomable mystery of the compensations of destiny!

IV

WHAT THE LANDLADY DISCOVERED

JEAN VALJEAN was prudent enough never to go out in the daytime. Every evening, however, about twilight, he would walk for an hour or two, sometimes alone, often with Cosette, selecting the most unfrequented side alleys of the boulevards and going into the churches at nightfall. He was fond of going to St. Médard, which is the nearest church. When he did not take Cosette she remained with the old woman; but it was the child's delight to go out with her kind old friend. She preferred an hour with him even to her delicious *tête-à-têtes* with Catherine. He would walk along holding her by the hand and telling her pleasant things.

It turned out that Cosette was very playful.

The old woman was housekeeper and cook and did the marketing.

They lived frugally, always with a little fire in the stove, but like people in embarrassed circumstances. Jean Valjean made no change in the furniture described on the first day, excepting that he caused a solid door to be put up in the place of the glass door of Cosette's little bedchamber.

He still wore his yellow coat, his black pantaloons, and his old hat. On the street he was taken for a beggar. It sometimes happened that kind-hearted dames, in passing, would turn and hand him a penny. Jean Valjean accepted the penny and bowed humbly. It chanced, sometimes, also that he would meet some wretched creature

begging alms, and then, glancing about him to be sure that no one was looking, he would stealthily approach the beggar, slip a piece of money, often silver, into his hands, and walk rapidly away. This had its inconveniences. He began to be known in the quarter as the beggar who gives alms.

The old landlady, a crabbed creature, fully possessed with that keen observation as to all that concerned her neighbors, which is peculiar to the suburbs, watched Jean Valjean closely without exciting his suspicion. She was a little deaf, which made her talkative. She had but two teeth left, one in the upper and one in the lower jaw, and these she was continually rattling together. She had questioned Cosette, who, knowing nothing, could tell nothing, further than that she came from Montfermeil. One morning this old female spy saw Jean Valjean go, with an appearance which seemed peculiar to the old busybody, into one of the uninhabited apartments of the building. She followed him with the steps of an old cat, and could see him, without herself being seen, through the chink of the door directly opposite. Jean Valjean had, doubtless for greater caution, turned his back toward the door in question. The old woman saw him fumble in his pocket and take from it a needle-case, scissors, and thread, and then proceed to rip open the lining of one lapel of his coat, and take from under it a piece of yellowish paper, which he unfolded. The beldame remarked with dismay that it was a bank-bill for 1,000 francs. It was the second or third one only that she had ever seen. She ran away very much frightened.

A moment afterward Jean Valjean accosted her and asked her to get this 1,000-franc bill changed for him, adding that it was the half-yearly interest on his property, which he had received on the previous day. "Where?" thought the old woman. He did not go out until six o'clock, and the government treasury is certainly not open at that hour. The old woman got the note changed, all the while forming her conjectures. This bill of 1,000 francs, commented upon and multiplied, gave rise to a host of breathless conferences among the gossips of the Rue des Vignes St. Marcel.

Some days afterward it chanced that Jean Valjean, in

his shirt-sleeves, was sawing wood in the entry. The old woman was in his room doing the chamber-work. She was alone. Cosette was intent upon the wood he was sawing. The old woman saw the coat hanging on a nail and examined it. The lining had been sewed over. She felt it carefully and thought she could detect in the lapels and in the padding thicknesses of paper. Other 1,000-franc bills beyond a doubt!

She noticed, besides, that there were all sorts of things in the pockets. Not only were there the needles, scissors, and thread, which she had already seen, but a large pocket-book, a very big knife, and, worst symptom of all, several wigs of different colors. Every pocket of his coat had the appearance of containing something to be provided with against sudden emergencies.

Thus, the occupants of the old building reached the closing days of winter.

V

A FIVE-FRANC PIECE FALLING ON THE FLOOR MAKES A NOISE

THERE was, in the neighborhood of St. Médard, a mendicant who sat crouching over the edge of a condemned public well near by, and to whom Jean Valjean often gave alms. He never passed this man without giving him a few pennies. Sometimes he spoke to him. Those who were envious of this poor creature said he was in the pay of the police. He was an old church beadle of 75, who was always mumbling prayers.

One evening, as Jean Valjean was passing that way, unaccompanied by Cosette, he noticed the beggar sitting in his usual place, under the street-lamp, which had just been lighted. The man, according to custom, seemed to be praying and was bent over. Jean Valjean walked up to him and put a piece of money in his hand, as usual. The beggar suddenly raised his eyes, gazed intently at Jean Valjean, and then quickly dropped his head. This movement was like a flash; Jean Valjean shuddered; it seemed to him that he had just seen, by the light of the street-lamp, not the calm, sanctimonious face of the aged beadle, but a terrible and well-known countenance. He experienced the sensation one would feel on finding himself

suddenly face to face, in the gloom, with a tiger. He recoiled, horror-stricken and petrified, daring neither to breathe nor to speak, to stay nor to fly, but gazing upon the beggar who had once more bent down his head with its tattered covering and seemed to be no longer conscious of his presence. At this singular moment an instinct, perhaps the mysterious instinct of self-preservation, prevented Jean Valjean from uttering a word. The beggar had the same form, the same rags, the same general appearance as on every other day. "Pshaw!" said Jean Valjean to himself, "I am mad! I am dreaming! It can not be!" And he went home anxious and ill at ease.

He scarcely dared to admit even to himself that the countenance he thought he had seen was the face of Javert.

That night upon reflection he regretted that he had not questioned the man so as to compel him to raise his head a second time. On the morrow at nightfall he went thither again. The beggar was in his place. "Good-day! Good-day!" said Jean Valjean, with firmness, as he gave him the accustomed alms. The beggar raised his head and answered in a whining voice: "Thanks, kind sir, thanks!" It was, indeed, only the old beadle.

Jean Valjean now felt fully reassured. He even began to laugh. "What the deuce! was I about to fancy that I saw Javert?" thought he; "is my sight growing poor already?" And he thought no more about it.

Some days after, it might be eight o'clock in the evening, he was in his room giving Cosette her spelling lesson, which the child was repeating in a loud voice, when he heard the door of the building open and close again. That seemed odd to him. The old woman, the only occupant of the house besides himself and Cosette, always went to bed at dark to save candles. Jean Valjean made a sign to Cosette to be silent. He heard some one coming upstairs. Possibly it might be the old woman who had felt unwell and had been to the druggist's. Jean Valjean listened. The footstep was heavy and sounded like a man's; but the old woman wore heavy shoes, and there is nothing so much like the step of a man as the step of an old woman. However, Jean Valjean blew out his candle.

He sent Cosette to bed, telling her in a suppressed voice to lie down very quietly—and as he kissed her forehead the

footsteps stopped. Jean Valjean remained silent and motionless, his back turned toward the door, still seated on his chair from which he had not moved and holding his breath in the darkness. After a considerable interval, not hearing anything more, he turned round without making any noise, and as he raised his eyes toward the door of his room he saw a light through the keyhole. The ray of light was an evil star in the black background of the door and the wall. There was, evidently, somebody outside with a candle, who was listening.

A few minutes elapsed and the light disappeared. But he heard no sound of footsteps, which seemed to indicate that whoever was listening at the door had taken off his shoes.

Jean Valjean threw himself on his bed without undressing, but could not shut his eyes that night.

At daybreak, as he was sinking into slumber from fatigue, he was aroused again by the creaking of the door of some room at the end of the hall, and then he heard the same footstep which had ascended the stairs on the preceding night. The step approached. He started from his bed and placed his eye to the keyhole, which was quite a large one, hoping to get a glimpse of the person, whoever it might be, who had made his way into the building in the night time and had listened at his door. It was a man, indeed, who passed by Jean Valjean's room, this time without stopping. The hall was still too dark for him to make out his features; but when the man reached the stairs a ray of light from without made his figure stand out like a profile, and Jean Valjean had a full view of his back. The man was tall, wore a long frock-coat, and had a cudgel under his arm. It was the redoubtable form of Javert.

Jean Valjean might have tried to get another look at him through his window that opened on the boulevard, but he would have had to raise the sash, and that he dared not do.

It was evident that the man had entered by means of a key as if at home. "Who, then, had given him the key, and what was the meaning of this?"

At seven o'clock in the morning, when the old lady came to clear up the rooms, Jean Valjean eyed her sharply but asked her no questions. The good dame appeared as usual.

While she was doing her sweeping she said: "Perhaps monsieur heard some one come in last night?"

At her age, and on that boulevard, eight o'clock in the evening is the very darkest of the night.

"Ah! yes, by the way, I did," he answered, in the most natural tone. "Who was it?"

"It's a new lodger," said the old woman, "who has come into the house."

"And his name is—"

"Well, I hardly recollect now. Dumont or Daumont—some such name as that."

"And what is he—this M. Daumont?"

The old woman studied him a moment through her little foxy eyes, and answered: "He's a gentleman living on his income like you."

She may have intended nothing by this, but Jean Valjean thought he could make out that she did.

When the old woman was gone he made a roll of 100 francs he had in a drawer and put it into his pocket. Do what he would to manage this so that the clinking of the silver should not be heard, a five-franc piece escaped his grasp and rolled jingling away over the floor.

At dusk he went to the street door and looked carefully up and down the boulevard. No one was to be seen. The boulevard seemed to be utterly deserted. It is true that there might have been some one hidden behind a tree.

He went upstairs again.

"Come," said he to Cosette.

He took her by the hand and they both went out.

BOOK FIFTH — A DARK CHASE NEEDS A SILENT HOUND

I

THE ZIGZAGS OF STRATEGY

IN order to understand the pages immediately following, and others also which will be found further on, an observation is here necessary.

Many years have already passed away since the author of this book—who is compelled reluctantly to speak of himself—was in Paris. Since then Paris has been transformed. A new city has arisen, which to him is in some sense unknown. He need not say that he loves Paris; Paris is the native city of his heart. Through demolition and reconstruction, the Paris of his youth—that Paris which he religiously treasures in his memory—has become a Paris of former times. Let him be permitted to speak of that Paris as if it still existed. It is possible that where the author is about to conduct his readers, saying: "In such a street there is such a house," there is now no longer either house or street. The reader will verify it if he chooses to take the trouble. As to himself, the author knows not the new Paris, and writes with the old Paris before his eyes in an illusion which is precious to him. It is a sweet thing for him to imagine that there still remains something of what he saw when he was in his own country, and that all is not vanished. While we are living in our native land we fancy that these streets are indifferent to us, that these windows, these roofs, and these doors are nothing to us, that these walls are strangers to us, that these trees are no more than other trees, that these houses which we never enter are useless to us, that this pavement on which we walk is nothing but stone. In after times, when we are there no longer, we find that those streets are very dear, that we miss those roofs, those windows, and those doors, that those walls are necessary to us, that those trees are our well-beloved, that those houses which we never entered we entered every day, and that we have left some-

thing of our affections, our life, and our heart in those streets. All those places which we see no more, which, perhaps, we shall never see again, but the image of which we have preserved, assume a mournful charm, return to us with the sadness of a spectre, make the Holy Land visible to us, and are, so to speak, the very form of France; and we love them and call them up such as they are, such as they were, and hold to them, unwilling to change anything, for one clings to the form of his fatherland as to the face of his mother.

Permit us, then, to speak of the past in the present. Saying which, we beg the reader to take note of it, and we proceed.

Jean Valjean had immediately left the boulevard and began to thread the streets, making as many turns as he could, returning sometimes upon his track to make sure that he was not followed.

This manœuvre is peculiar to the hunted stag. On ground where the foot leaves a mark it has, among other advantages, that of deceiving the hunters and the dogs by the counterstep. It is what is called in venery *false reimbushment.*

The moon was full. Jean Valjean was not sorry for that. The moon, still near the horizon, cut large prisms of light and shade in the streets. Jean Valjean could glide along the houses and the walls on the dark side and observe the light side. He did not, perhaps, sufficiently realize that the obscure side escaped him. However, in all the deserted little streets in the neighborhood of the Rue de Poliveau, he felt sure that no one was behind him.

Cosette walked without asking any questions. The sufferings of the first six years of her life had introduced something of the passive into her nature. Besides—and this is a remark to which we shall have more than one occasion to return—she had become familiar, without being fully conscious of them, with the peculiarities of her good friend and the eccentricities of destiny. And then she felt safe, being with him.

Jean Valjean knew no more than Cosette where he was going. He trusted in God, as she trusted in him. It seemed to him that he held some one greater than himself by the hand; he believed, he felt an invisible being leading

him. Finally, he had no definite idea, no plan, no project. He was not even absolutely sure that this was Javert, and then it might be Javert and Javert not know that he was Jean Valjean. Was he not disguised? Was he not supposed to be dead? Nevertheless, singular things had happened within the last few days. He wanted no more of them. He was determined not to enter Gorbeau House again. Like the animal hunted from his den, he was looking for a hole to hide in until he could find one to remain in.

Jean Valjean described many and varied labyrinths in the Quartier Mouffetard, which was asleep already, as if it were still under the discipline of the middle age and the yoke of the curfew; he produced different combinations, in wise strategy, with the Rue Censier and the Rue Copeau, the Rue du Battoir St. Victor and the Rue du Puits l'Ermite. There are lodgings in that region, but he did not even enter them, not finding what suited him. He had no doubt whatever that if, perchance, they had sought his track, they had lost it.

As eleven o'clock struck in the tower of St. Etienne du Mont he crossed the Rue de Pontoise in front of the bureau of the commissary of police, which is at No. 14. Some moments afterward the instinct of which we have already spoken made him turn his head. At this moment he saw distinctly—thanks to the commissary's lamp which revealed them—three men, following him quite near, pass one after another under this lamp on the dark side of the street. One of these men entered the passage leading to the commissary's house. The one in advance appeared to him decidedly suspicious.

"Come, child!" said he to Cosette, and he made haste to get out of the Rue de Pontoise.

He made a circuit, went round the Arcade des Patriarches, which was closed on account of the lateness of the hour, walked rapidly through the Rue de l'Epée-de-Bois and the Rue de l'Arbaléte, and plunged into the Rue des Postes.

There was a square there, where the Collège Rollin now is, and from which branches off the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève.

We need not say that the Rue Neuve-Sainte-Geneviève

is an old street, and that there a post-chaise did not pass once in ten years through the Rue des Postes. This Rue des Postes was, in the thirteenth century, inhabited by potters, and its true name is Rue des Pots.

The moon lighted up this square brightly. Jean Valjean concealed himself in a doorway, calculating that if these men were still following him he could not fail to get a good view of them when they crossed this lighted space.

In fact, three minutes had not elapsed when the men appeared. There were now four of them; all were tall, dressed in long brown coats, with round hats, and great clubs in their hands. They were not less fearfully forbidding by their size and their large fists than by their stealthy tread in the darkness. One would have taken them for four spectres in citizen's dress.

They stopped in the centre of the square and formed a group like people consulting. They appeared undecided. The man who seemed to be the leader turned and energetically pointed in the direction in which Jean Valjean was; one of the others seemed to insist with some obstinacy on the contrary direction. At the instant when the leader turned the moon shone full in his face. Jean Valjean recognized Javert perfectly.

II

IT IS FORTUNATE THAT VEHICLES CAN CROSS THE BRIDGE OF AUSTERLITZ

UNCERTAINTY was at an end for Jean Valjean; happily, it still continued with these men. He took advantage of their hesitation; it was time lost for them, gained for him. He came out from the doorway in which he was concealed, and made his way into the Rue des Postes toward the region of the Jardin des Plantes. Cosette began to be tired; he took her in his arms and carried her. There was nobody in the streets, and the lamps had not been lighted on account of the moon.

He doubled his pace.

In a few steps he reached the goblet pottery, on the façade of which the old inscription stood out distinctly legible in the light of the moon:

De Goblet fils c'est ici la fabrique;
Venez choisir des cruches et des brocs,
Des pots à fleurs, des tugaux, de la brique,
A tout venant le Cœur vend des Carreaux.

He passed through the Rue de la Clef, then by the Fontaine de Saint-Victor along the Jardin des Plantes by the lower streets, and reached the quay. There he looked around. The quay was deserted. The streets were deserted. Nobody behind him. He took breath.

He arrived at the bridge of Austerlitz.

It was still a toll-bridge at this period.

He presented himself at the toll-house and gave one sou.

"It is two sous," said the toll-keeper. "You are carrying a child who can walk. Pay for two."

He paid, annoyed that his passage should have attracted observation. All flight should be gliding.

A large cart was passing the Seine at the same time, and, like him, was going toward the right bank. This could be made of use. He could go the whole length of the bridge in the shade of this cart.

Toward the middle of the bridge, Cosette, her feet becoming numb, desired to walk. He put her down and took her by the hand.

The bridge passed, he perceived some wood-yards a little to the right and walked in that direction. To get there he must venture into a large, clear open space. He did not hesitate. Those who followed him were evidently thrown off his track, and Jean Valjean believed himself out of danger. Sought for he might be, but followed he was not.

A little street, the Rue du Chemin-Vert St. Antoine, opened between two wood-yards inclosed by walls. This street was narrow, obscure, and seemed made expressly for him. Before entering it he looked back.

From the point where he was he could see the whole length of the bridge of Austerlitz.

Four shadows, at that moment, entered upon the bridge.

These shadows were coming from the Jardin des Plantes toward the right bank.

These four shadows were the four men.

Jean Valjean felt a shudder like that of the deer when he sees the hounds again upon his track.

One hope was left him; it was that these men had not entered upon the bridge, and had not perceived him when he crossed the large, clear space leading Cosette by the hand.

In that case, by plunging into the little street before him, if he could succeed in reaching the wood-yards, the marshes, the fields, the open grounds, he could escape.

It seemed to him that he might trust himself to this silent little street. He entered it.

III

SEE THE PLAN OF PARIS OF 1727

SOME 300 paces on, he reached a point where the street forked. It divided into two streets, the one turning off obliquely to the left, the other to the right. Jean Valjean had before him the two branches of a Y. Which should he choose?

He did not hesitate, but took the right.

Why?

Because the left branch led toward the faubourg—that is to say, toward the inhabited region, and the right branch toward the country—that is, toward the uninhabited region.

But now they no longer walked very fast. Cosette's step slackened Jean Valjean's pace.

He took her and carried her again. Cosette rested her head upon the good man's shoulders, and did not say a word.

He turned, from time to time, and looked back. He took care to keep always on the dark side of the street. The street was straight behind him. The two or three first times he turned he saw nothing; the silence was complete, and he kept on his way somewhat reassured. Suddenly, on turning again, he thought he saw in the portion of the street through which he had just passed, far in the obscurity, something which stirred.

He plunged forward rather than walked, hoping to find some side street by which to escape, and once more to elude his pursuers.

He came to a wall.

This wall, however, did not prevent him from going further; it was a wall forming the side of a cross alley, in which the street Jean Valjean was then in came to an end.

Here again he must decide; should he take the right or the left?

He looked to the right. The alley ran out into a space between some buildings that were mere sheds or barns, then terminated abruptly. The end of this blind alley was plain to be seen—a great white wall.

He looked to the left. The alley on this side was open, and, about 200 paces further on, ran into a street of which it was an affluent. In this direction lay safety.

The instant Jean Valjean decided to turn to the left, to try to reach the street which he saw at the end of the alley, he perceived, at the corner of the alley and the street toward which he was just about going, a sort of black, motionless statue.

It was a man who had just been posted there, evidently, and who was waiting for him, guarding the passage.

Jean Valjean was startled.

This part of Paris where Jean Valjean was, situated between the Faubourg St. Antoine and the La Râpée, is one of those which have been entirely transformed by the recent works—a change for the worse, in the opinion of some, a transfiguration, according to others. The vegetable gardens, the wood-yards, and the old buildings are gone. There are now broad, new streets, circuses, amphitheatres, hippodromes, railroad depots, a prison, Mazas; progressive, as we see, with its corrective.

Half a century ago, in the common popular language, full of tradition, which obstinately calls l'Institut Les Quatre Nations, and l'Opera Comique Feydeau, the precise spot which Jean Valjean had reached was called the Petit Picpus. The Porte St. Jacques, the Porte Paris, the Barrière des Sergeants, the Porcherons, the Galiote, the Célestins, the Capuchins, the Mail, the Bourbe, the Arbre de Cracovie, the Pologne, the Petit Picpus, these are the names of the old Paris floating over into the new. The memory of the people buoys over these waifs of the past.

The Petit Picpus, which, in fact, hardly had a real existence, and was never more than a mere outline of a

quarter, had almost the monkish aspect of a Spanish city. The roads were poorly paved, the streets were thinly built up. Beyond the two or three streets of which we are about to speak there was nothing there but wall and solitude. Not a shop, not a vehicle, hardly a light here and there in the windows; all the lights put out after ten o'clock. Gardens, convents, wood-yard, market gardens, a few scattered low houses, and great walls as high as the houses.

Such was the quarter in the last century. The Revolution had already very much altered it. The republican authorities had pulled down buildings and run streets into and through it. Depositories of rubbish had been established there. Thirty years ago this quarter was being gradually erased by the construction of new buildings. It is now completely blotted out. The Petit Picpus, of which no present plan retains a trace, is clearly enough indicated in the plan of 1727, published at Paris by Denis Thierry, Rue St. Jacques, opposite the Rue du Plâtre, and at Lyons by Jean Girin, Rue Mercière, à la Prudence. The Petit Picpus had what we have just called a Y of streets, formed by the Rue du Chemin Vert St. Antoine dividing into two branches, and taking on the left the name Petite Rue Picpus and on the right the name of Rue Polonceau. The two branches of the Y were joined at the top as by a bar. This bar was called the Rue Droit Mur. The Rue Polonceau ended there; the Petite Rue Picpus passed beyond, rising toward the Marché Lenoir. He who, coming from the Seine, reached the extremity of the Rue Polonceau, had on his left the Rue Droit Mur turning sharply at the right angle, before him the side wall of the street, and on his right a truncated prolongation of the Rue Droit Mur, without thoroughfare, called the Cul-de-sac Genrot.

Jean Valjean was in this place.

As we have said, on perceiving the black form standing sentry at the corner of the Rue Droit Mur and the Petite Rue Picpus, he was startled. There was no doubt. He was watched by this shadow.

What should he do?

There was, now, no time to turn back. What he had seen moving in the obscurity some distance behind him, the moment before, was undoubtedly Javert and his squad.

Javert, probably, had already reached the commencement of the street of which Jean Valjean was at the end. Javert, to all appearance, was acquainted with this little trap, and had taken his precautions by sending one of his men to guard the exit. These conjectures, so like certainties, whirled about wildly in Jean Valjean's troubled brain, as a handful of dust flies before a sudden blast. He scrutinized the Cul-de-sac Genrot; there were high walls. He scrutinized the Petite Rue Picpus; there was a sentinel. He saw that dark form repeated in black upon the white pavement flooded with the moonlight. To advance was to fall upon that man. To go back was to throw himself into Javert's hands. Jean Valjean felt as if caught by a chain that was slowly winding up. He looked up into the sky in despair.

IV

GROPING FOR ESCAPE

IN order to understand what follows it is necessary to form an exact idea of the little Rue Droit Mur, and particularly the corner which it makes at the left as you leave the Rue Polonceau to enter this alley. The little Rue Droit Mur was almost entirely lined on the right, as far as the Petite Rue Picpus, by houses of poor appearance; on the left by a single building of severe outline, composed of several structures which rose gradually a story or two, one above another, as they approached the Petite Rue Picpus, so that the building, very high on the side of the Petite Rue Picpus, was quite low on the side of the Rue Polonceau. There, at the corner of which we have spoken, it became so low as to be nothing more than a wall. This wall did not abut squarely on the corner, which was cut off diagonally, leaving a considerable space that was shielded by the two angles thus formed from observers at a distance in either the Rue Polonceau or the Rue Droit Mur.

From these two angles of the truncated corner the walls extended along the Rue Polonceau as far as a house, No. 49, and along the Rue Droit Mur, where its height was much less, to the sombre-looking building of which we have

spoken, cutting its gable, and thus making a new re-entering angle in the street. This gable had a gloomy aspect; there was but one window to be seen, or, rather, two shutters covered with a sheet of zinc and always closed.

The situation of the places which we describe here is rigorously exact, and will certainly awaken a very precise remembrance in the minds of the old inhabitants of the locality.

This truncated corner was entirely filled by a thing which seemed like a colossal and miserable door. It was a vast, shapeless assemblage of perpendicular planks, broader above than below, bound together by long, transverse iron bands. At the side there was a porte-cochère of the ordinary dimensions, which had evidently been cut in within the last fifty years.

A lime tree lifted its branches above this corner, and the wall was covered with ivy toward the Rue Polonceau.

In the imminent peril of Jean Valjean this sombre building had a solitary and uninhabited appearance, which attracted him. He glanced over it rapidly. He thought if he could only succeed in getting into it he would perhaps be safe. Hope came to him with the idea.

Midway of the front of this building on the Rue Droit Mur there were at all the windows of the different stories old leaden waste-pipes. The varied branchings of the tubing, which was continued from a central conduit to each of these waste-pipes, outlined on the façade a sort of tree. These ramifications of the pipes, with their 100 elbows, seemed like those old, closely pruned grape-vines which twist about over the front of ancient farm-houses.

This grotesque espalier, with its sheet-iron branches, was the first object which Jean Valjean saw. He seated Cosette with her back against a post, and, telling her to be quiet, ran to the spot where the conduit came to the pavement. Perhaps there was some means of scaling the wall by that and entering the house. But the conduit was dilapidated and out of use, and scarcely held by its fastening. Besides, all the windows of this silent house were protected by thick bars of iron, even the dormer windows. And then the moon shone full upon this facade, and the man who was watching from the end of the street would have seen Jean Valjean making the escalade. And

then what should he do with Cosette? How could he raise her to the top of a three-story house?

He gave up climbing by the conduit and crept along the wall to the Rue Polonceau.

When he reached this flattened corner where he had left Cosette, he noticed that there no one could see him. He escaped, as we have just explained, all observation from every side. Besides, he was in the shade. Then there were two doors. Perhaps they might be forced. The wall, above which he saw the lime and the ivy, evidently surrounded a garden, where he could at least conceal himself, although there were no leaves on the trees yet, and pass the rest of the night.

Time was passing. He must act quickly.

He tried the carriage-door, and found at once that it was fastened within and without.

He approached the other large door with more hope. It was frightfully decrepit; its immense size even rendering it less solid; the planks were rotten, the iron fastenings, of which there were three, were rusted. It seemed possible to pierce this worm-eaten structure.

On examining it he saw that this door was not a door. It had neither hinges, braces, lock, nor crack in the middle. The iron bands crossed from one side to the other without a break. Through the crevices of the planks he saw the rubble-work and stones, roughly cemented, which the passers-by could have seen within the last ten years. He was compelled to admit, with consternation, that this appearance of a door was simply an ornamentation in wood of a wall, upon which it was placed. It was easy to tear off a board, but then he would find himself face to face with a wall.

V

WHICH WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE WERE THE STREETS LIGHTED WITH GAS

AT this moment a muffled and regular sound began to make itself heard at some distance. Jean Valjean ventured to thrust his head a little way round the corner of the street. Seven or eight soldiers, formed in platoon, had just turned into the Rue Polonceau. He saw the gleam of their bayonets. They were coming toward him.

These soldiers, at whose head he distinguished the tall form of Javert, advanced slowly and with precaution. They stopped frequently. It was plain they were exploring all the recesses of the walls and all the entrances of doors and alleys.

It was—and here conjecture could not be deceived—some patrol which Javert had met and which he had put in requisition.

Javert's two assistants marched in the ranks.

At the rate at which they were marching, and with the stops they were making, it would take them about a quarter of an hour to arrive at the spot where Jean Valjean was. It was a frightful moment. A few minutes separated Jean Valjean from that awful precipice which was opening before him for the third time. And the galleys now were no longer simply the galleys, they were Cosette lost forever—that is to say, a life in death.

There was now only one thing possible.

Jean Valjean had this peculiarity; he might be said to carry two knapsacks; in one he had the thoughts of a saint, in the other the formidable talents of a convict. He helped himself from one or the other as occasion required.

Among other resources, thanks to his numerous escapes from the galleys at Toulon, he had, it will be remembered, become master of the incredible art of raising himself, in the right angle of a wall if need be, to the height of a sixth story; an art without ladders or props, by mere muscular strength, supporting himself by the back of his neck, his shoulders, his hips, and his knees, hardly making use of the few projections of the stone, which rendered so terrible and so celebrated the corner of the yard of the conciergerie of Paris, by which, some twenty years ago, the convict Battemolle made his escape.

Jean Valjean measured with his eyes the wall, above which he saw the lime-tree. It was about eighteen feet high. The angle that it made with the gable of the great building was filled in its lower part with a pile of masonry of triangular shape, probably intended to preserve the too-convenient recess from a too-public use. This preventive filling up of the corners of a wall is very common in Paris.

This pile was about five feet high. From its top the

space to climb to get upon the wall was hardly more than fourteen feet.

The wall was capped by a flat stone without any projection.

The difficulty was Cosette. Cosette did not know how to scale a wall. Abandon her? Jean Valjean did not think of it. To carry her was impossible. The whole strength of a man is necessary to accomplish these strange ascents. The least burden would make him lose his centre of gravity and he would fall.

He needed a cord. Jean Valjean had none. Where could he find a cord, at midnight, in the Rue Polonceau? Truly, at that instant, if Jean Valjean had had a kingdom, he would have given it for a rope.

All extreme situations have their flashes which sometimes make us blind, sometimes illuminate us.

The despairing gaze of Jean Valjean encountered the lamp-post in the Cul-de-sac Genrot.

At this epoch there were no gas lights in the streets of Paris. At nightfall they lighted the street lamps, which were placed at intervals, and were raised and lowered by means of a rope traversing the street from end to end, running through the grooves of posts. The reel on which this rope was wound was inclosed below the lantern in a little iron box, the key of which was kept by the lamplighter, and the rope itself was protected by a casing of metal.

Jean Valjean, with the energy of a final struggle, crossed the street at a bound, entered the Cul-de-sac, sprang the bolt of the little box with the point of his knife, and an instant after was back at the side of Cosette. He had a rope. These desperate inventors of expedients, in their struggles with fatality, move electrically in case of need.

We have explained that the street lamps had not been lighted that night. The lamp in the Cul-de-sac Genrot was then, as a matter of course, extinguished like the rest, and one might pass by without even noticing that it was not in its place.

Meanwhile, the hour, the place, the darkness, the preoccupation of Jean Valjean, his singular actions, his going to and fro, all this began to disturb Cosette. Any

other child would have uttered loud cries long before. She contented herself with pulling Jean Valjean by the skirt of his coat. The sound of the approaching patrol was constantly becoming more and more distinct.

"Father," said she, in a whisper, "I am afraid. Who is that that is coming?"

"Hush!" answered the unhappy man, "it is the Thenardiess."

Cosette shuddered. He added: "Don't say a word; I'll take care of her. If you cry, if you make any noise, the Thenardiess will hear you. She is coming to catch you."

Then, without any haste, but without doing anything a second time, with a firm and rapid precision, so much the more remarkable at such a moment when the patrol and Javert might come upon him at any instant, he took off his cravat, passed it around Cosette's body under the arms, taking care that it should not hurt the child, attached this cravat to an end of the rope by means of the knot which seamen call a swallow-knot, took the other end of the rope in his teeth, took off his shoes and stockings and threw them over the wall, climbed upon the pile of masonry and began to raise himself in the angle of the wall and the gable with as much solidity and certainty as if he had the rounds of a ladder under his heels and his elbows. Half a minute had not passed before he was on his knees on the wall.

Cosette watched him, stupefied, without saying a word. Jean Valjean's charge and the name of the Thenardiess had made her dumb.

All at once she heard Jean Valjean's voice calling to her in a low whisper: "Put your back against the wall."

She obeyed.

"Don't speak and don't be afraid," added Jean Valjean.

And she felt herself lifted from the ground.

Before she had time to think where she was she was at the top of the wall.

Jean Valjean seized her, put her on his back, took her two little hands in his left hand, lay down flat, and crawled along the top of the wall as far as the cut-off corner. As he had supposed, there was a building there, the roof of which sloped from the top of the wooden casing we have

mentioned very nearly to the ground, with a gentle inclination, and just reaching to the lime tree.

A fortunate circumstance, for the wall was much higher on this side than on the street. Jean Valjean saw the ground beneath him at a great depth.

He had just reached the inclined plane of the roof, and had not yet left the crest of the wall, when a violent uproar proclaimed the arrival of the patrol. He heard the thundering voice of Javert: "Search the Cul-de-sac! The Rue Droit Mur is guarded, the Petite Rue Picpus also. I'll answer for it he is in the Cul-de-sac."

The soldiers rushed into the Cul-de-sac Genrot.

Jean Valjean slid down the roof, keeping hold of Cosette, reached the lime tree and jumped to the ground. Whether from terror, or from courage, Cosette had not uttered a whisper. Her hands were a little scraped.

VI

COMMENCEMENT OF AN ENIGMA

JEAN VALJEAN found himself in a sort of garden, very large and of a singular appearance; one of those gloomy gardens which seem made to be seen in the winter and at night. This garden was oblong, with a row of large poplars at the further end, some tall forest trees in the corners and a clear space in the centre, where stood a very large isolated tree, then a few fruit trees, contorted and shaggy, like big bushes, some vegetable beds, a melon patch, the glass covers of which shone in the moonlight, and an old well. There were here and there stone benches which seemed black with moss. The walks were bordered with sorry little shrubs perfectly straight. The grass covered half of them, and a green moss covered the rest.

Jean Valjean had on one side the building, down the roof of which he had come, a wood-pile, and behind the wood, against the wall, a stone statue, the mutilated face of which was now nothing but a shapeless mask, which was seen dimly through the obscurity.

The building was in ruins, but some dismantled rooms could be distinguished in it, one of which was well filled and appeared to serve as a shed.

The large building of the Rue Droit Mur, which ran back on the Petite Rue Picpus, presented upon this garden two square façades. These inside façades were still more gloomy than those on the outside. All the windows were grated. No light was to be seen. On the upper stories there were shutters, as in prisons. The shadow of one of these façades was projected upon the other, and fell on the garden like an immense black pall.

No other house could be seen. The further end of the garden was lost in mist and in darkness. Still, he could make out walls intersecting, as if there were other cultivated grounds beyond, as well as the low roofs of the Rue Polonceau.

Nothing can be imagined more wild and more solitary than this garden. There was no one there, which was very natural on account of the hour; but it did not seem as if the place were made for anybody to walk in, even in broad noon.

Jean Valjean's first care had been to find his shoes and put them on; then he entered the shed with Cosette. A man trying to escape never thinks himself sufficiently concealed. The child, thinking constantly of the Thenardiess, shared his instinct, and cowered down as closely as she could.

Cosette trembled, and pressed closely to his side. They heard the tumultuous clamor of the patrol ransacking the Cul-de-sac and the street, the clatter of their muskets against the stones, the calls of Javert to the watchmen he had stationed, and his imprecations mingled with words which they could not distinguish.

At the end of a quarter of an hour it seemed as though this stormy rumbling began to recede. Jean Valjean did not breathe.

He had placed his hand gently upon Cosette's mouth.

But the solitude about him was so strangely calm that that frightful din, so furious and so near, did not even cast over it a shadow of disturbance. It seemed as if these walls were built of the deaf stones spoken of in scripture.

Suddenly, in the midst of this deep calm, a new sound arose; a celestial, divine, ineffable sound, as ravishing as the other was horrible. It was a hymn which came forth

from the darkness, a bewildering mingling of prayer and harmony in the obscure and fearful silence of the night; voices of women, but voices with the pure accents of virgins, and the artless accents of children; those voices which are not of earth, and which resemble those that the new-born still hear, and the dying hear already. This song came from the gloomy building which overlooked the garden. At the moment when the uproar of the demons receded one would have said it was a choir of angels approaching in the darkness.

Cosette and Jean Valjean fell on their knees.

They knew not what it was; they knew not where they were; but they both felt, the man and the child, the penitent and the innocent, that they ought to be on their knees.

These voices had this strange effect; they did not prevent the building from appearing deserted. It was like a supernatural song in an uninhabited dwelling.

While these voices were singing Jean Valjean was entirely absorbed in them. He no longer saw the night, he saw the blue sky. He seemed to feel the spreading of these wings which we all have within us.

The chant ceased. Perhaps it had lasted a long time. Jean Valjean could not have told. Hours of ecstasy are never more than a moment.

All had again relapsed into silence. There was nothing more in the street, nothing more in the garden. That which threatened, that which reassured, all had vanished. The wind rattled the dry grass on the top of the wall, which made a low, soft, and mournful noise.

VII

THE ENIGMA CONTINUED

THE night wind had risen, which indicated that it must be between one and two o'clock in the morning. Poor Cosette did not speak. As she had sat down at his side and leaned her head on him, Jean Valjean thought that she was asleep. He bent over and looked at her. Her eyes were wide open, and she had a look that gave Jean Valjean pain.

She was still trembling.

"Are you sleepy?" said Jean Valjean.

"I am very cold," she answered.

A moment after she added: "Is she there yet?"

"Who?" said Jean Valjean.

"Mme. Thenardier."

Jean Valjean had already forgotten the means he had employed to secure Cosette's silence.

"Oh!" said he, "she has gone. Don't be afraid any longer."

The child sighed as if a weight were lifted from her breast.

The ground was damp, the shed open on all sides, the wind freshened every moment. The good man took off his coat and wrapped Cosette in it.

"Are you warmer, so?"

"Oh! yes, father!"

"Well, wait here a moment for me. I shall soon be back."

He went out of the ruin and along by the large building in search of some better shelter. He found doors, but they were all closed. All the windows of the ground floor were barred.

As he passed the interior angle of the building he noticed several arched windows before him, where he perceived some light. He rose on tiptoe and looked in at one of these windows. They all opened into a large hall, paved with broad slabs, and intersected by arches and pillars; he could distinguish nothing but a slight glimmer in the deep obscurity. This glimmer came from a night-lamp burning in a corner. The hall was deserted; everything was motionless. However, by dint of looking, he thought he saw something stretched out on the pavement, which appeared to be covered with a shroud, and which resembled a human form. It was lying with the face downward, the arms crossed, in the immobility of death. One would have said, from a sort of serpent which trailed along the pavement, that this ill-omened figure had a rope about its neck.

The whole hall was enveloped in that mist peculiar to dimly lighted places, which always increases horror.

Jean Valjean has often said since that, although in the course of his life he had seen many funereal sights, never had he seen anything more freezing and more terrible than this enigmatical figure fulfilling some strange mystery, he

knew not what, in that gloomy place, and thus dimly seen in the night. It was terrifying to suppose that it was, perhaps, dead, and still more terrifying to think that it might be alive.

He had the courage to press his forehead against the glass and watch to see if the thing would move. He remained what seemed to him a long time in vain; the prostrate form made no movement. Suddenly he was seized with an inexpressible dismay, and he fled. He ran toward the shed without daring to look behind him. It seemed to him that if he should turn his head he would see the figure walking behind him with rapid strides and shaking its arms.

He reached the ruin breathless. His knees gave way; a cold sweat oozed out from every pore.

Where was he? Who would ever have imagined anything equal to this species of sepulchre in the midst of Paris? What was this strange house? A building full of nocturnal mystery, calling to souls in the shade with the voice of angels, and, when they came, abruptly presenting to them this frightful vision—promising to open the radiant gate of heaven and opening the horrible door of the tomb. And that was, in fact, a building, a house which had its number in a street. It was not a dream. He had to touch the walls to believe it.

The cold, the anxiety, the agitation, the anguish of the night, were giving him a veritable fever, and all his ideas were jostling in his brain.

He went to Cosette. She was sleeping.

VIII

THE ENIGMA REDOUBLES

THE child had laid her head upon a stone and gone to sleep.

He sat down near her and looked at her. Little by little, as he beheld her, he grew calm and regained possession of his clearness of mind.

He plainly perceived this truth, the basis of his life henceforth, that so long as she should be alive, so long as he should have her with him, he should need nothing ex-

cept for her and fear nothing save on her account. He did not even realize that he was very cold, having taken off his coat to cover her.

Meanwhile, through the reverie into which he had fallen, he had heard for some time a singular noise. It sounded like a little bell that some one was shaking. This noise was in the garden. It was heard distinctly, though feebly. It resembled the dimly heard tinkling of cow-bells in the pastures at night.

This noise made Jean Valjean turn.

He looked, and saw that there was some one in the garden.

Something which resembled a man was walking among the glass cases of the melon patch, rising up, stooping down, stopping, with a regular motion, as if he were drawing or stretching something upon the ground. This being appeared to limp.

Jean Valjean shuddered with the continual tremor of the outcast. To them everything is hostile and suspicious. They distrust the day because it helps to discover them, and the night because it helps to surprise them. Just now he was shuddering because the garden was empty, now he shuddered because there was some one in it.

He fell again from chimerical terrors into real terrors. He said to himself that perhaps Javert and his spies had not gone away, that they had doubtless left somebody on the watch in the street; that, if this man should discover him in the garden, he would cry "Thief!" and would deliver him up. He took the sleeping Cosette gently in his arms and carried her into the furthest corner of the shed behind a heap of old furniture that was out of use. Cosette did not stir.

From there he watched the strange motions of the man in the melon patch. It seemed very singular, but the sound of the bell followed every movement of the man. When the man approached the sound approached; when he moved away the sound moved away; if he made some sudden motion a trill accompanied the motion; when he stopped the noise ceased. It seemed evident that the bell was fastened to this man; but then what could that mean? What was this man to whom a bell was hung as to a ram or a cow?

While he was revolving these questions he touched Cosette's hands. They were icy.

"Oh! God!" said he.

He called to her in a low voice: "Cosette!"

She did not open her eyes.

He shook her smartly.

She did not wake.

"Could she be dead?" said he, and he sprang up, shuddering from head to foot.

The most frightful thoughts rushed through his mind in confusion. There are moments when hideous suppositions besiege us like a throng of furies and violently force the portals of our brain. When those whom we love are in danger our solicitude invents all sorts of follies. He remembered that sleep may be fatal in the open air in a cold night.

Cosette was pallid; she had fallen prostrate on the ground at his feet, making no sign.

He listened for her breathing. She was breathing; but with a respiration that appeared feeble and about to stop.

How should he get her warm again? how rouse her? All else was banished from his thoughts. He rushed desperately out of the ruin.

It was absolutely necessary that in less than a quarter of an hour Cosette should be in bed and before a fire.

IX

THE MAN WITH THE BELL

HE walked straight to the man whom he saw in the garden. He had taken in his hand the roll of money which was in his vest pocket.

This man had his head down and did not see him coming. A few strides, Jean Valjean was at his side.

Jean Valjean approached him, exclaiming: "A hundred francs!"

The man started and raised his eyes.

"A hundred francs for you," continued Jean Valjean, "if you will give me refuge to-night."

The moon shone full in Jean Valjean's bewildered face.

"What, is it you, Father Madeleine?" said the man.

This name, thus pronounced, at this dark hour, in this unknown place, by this unknown man, made Jean Valjean start back.

He was ready for anything but that. The speaker was an old man, bent and lame, dressed much like a peasant, who had on his left knee a leather knee-cap, from which hung a bell. His face was in the shade and could not be distinguished.

Meanwhile the good man had taken off his cap and was exclaiming, tremulously: "Ah! my God! how did you come here, Father Madeleine? How did you get in? O Lord! Did you fall from the sky? There is no doubt, if you ever do fall, you will fall from there. And what has happened to you? You have no cravat, you have no hat, you have no coat? Do you know that you would have frightened anybody who did not know you? No coat? Merciful heavens! Are the saints all crazy now? But how did you get in?"

One word did not wait for another. The old man spoke with a rustic volubility in which there was nothing disquieting. All this was said with a mixture of astonishment and frank good-nature.

"Who are you, and what is this house?" asked Jean Valjean.

"Oh, indeed! that is good, now," exclaimed the old man. "I am the one you got the place for here, and this house is the one you got me the place in. What! you don't remember me?"

"No," said Jean Valjean. "And how does it happen that you know me?"

"You saved my life," said the man.

He turned, a ray of the moon lighted up his side-face, and Jean Valjean recognized old Fauchelevent.

"Ah!" said Jean Valjean, "it is you; yes, I remember you."

"That is very fortunate," said the old man, in a reproachful tone.

"And what are you doing here?" added Jean Valjean.

"Oh! I am covering my melons."

Old Fauchelevent had in his hand, indeed, at the moment when Jean Valjean accosted him, the end of a piece of awning which he was stretching out over the melon

patch. He had already spread out several in this way during the hour he had been in the garden. It was this work which made him go through the peculiar motions observed by Jean Valjean from the shed.

He continued: "I said to myself: 'The moon is bright; there is going to be a frost. Suppose I put their jackets on my melons?' And," added he, looking at Jean Valjean, with a loud laugh, "you would have done well to do as much for yourself; but how did you come here?"

Jean Valjean, finding that he was known by this man, at least under his name of Madeleine, went no further with his precautions. He multiplied questions. Oddly enough their parts seemed reversed. It was he, the intruder, who put questions.

"And what is this bell you have on your knee?"

"That," answered Fauchelevent—"that is so that they may keep away from me."

"How! keep away from you?"

Old Fauchelevent winked in an indescribable manner.

"Ah! Bless me! there's nothing but women in this house; plenty of young girls. It seems that I am dangerous to meet. The bell warns them. When I come they go away."

"What is this house?"

"Why, you know very well."

"No, I don't."

"Why, you got me this place here as gardener."

"Answer me as if I didn't know."

"Well, it is the Convent of the Petit Picpus, then."

Jean Valjean remembered. Chance, that is to say, Providence, had thrown him precisely into this convent of the Quartier St. Antoine, to which old Fauchelevent, crippled by his fall from his cart, had been admitted, upon his recommendation, two years before. He repeated, as if he were talking to himself: "The Convent of the Petit Picpus!"

"But now, really," resumed Fauchelevent, "how the deuce did you manage to get in—you, Father Madeleine? It is no use for you to be a saint; you are a man, and no men come in here."

"But you are here."

"There is none but me."

"But," resumed Jean Valjean, "I must stay here."

"Oh, my God!" exclaimed Fauchelevent.

Jean Valjean approached the old man and said to him, in a grave voice: "Father Fauchelevent, I saved your life."

"I was first to remember it," answered Fauchelevent.

"Well, you can now do for me what I once did for you."

Fauchelevent grasped in his old wrinkled and trembling hands the robust hands of Jean Valjean, and it was some seconds before he could speak. At last he exclaimed: "Oh! that would be a blessing of God if I could do something for you in return for that! I save your life? M. l'Mayor, the old man is at your disposal."

A wonderful joy had, as it were, transfigured the old gardener. A radiance seemed to shine forth from his face.

"What do you want me to do?" added he.

"I will explain. You have a room?"

"I have a solitary shanty over there behind the ruins of the old convent, in a corner that nobody ever sees. There are three rooms."

The shanty was, in fact, so well concealed behind the ruins, and so well arranged that no one should see it, that Jean Valjean had not seen it.

"Good," said Jean Valjean. "Now, I ask of you two things."

"What are they, M. l'Mayor?"

"First, that you will not tell anybody what you know about me. Second, that you will not attempt to learn anything more."

"As you please. I know that you can do nothing dishonorable and that you have always been a man of God. And then, besides, it was you who put me here. It is your place; I am yours."

"Very well. But now come with me. We will go for the child."

"Ah!" said Fauchelevent, "there is a child!"

He said not a word more, but followed Jean Valjean as a dog follows his master.

In half an hour Cosette, again become rosy before a good fire, was asleep in the old gardener's bed. Jean Valjean had put on his cravat and coat; his hat, which he had thrown over the wall, had been found and brought in. While Jean Valjean was putting on his coat Fauchelevent

had taken off his knee-cap with the bell attached, which now, hanging on a nail near a shutter, decorated the wall. The two men were warming themselves, with their elbows on the table, on which Fauchelevent had set a piece of cheese, some brown bread, a bottle of wine and two glasses, and the old man said to Jean Valjean, putting his hand on his knee: "Ah, Father Madeleine! you didn't know me at first. You save people's lives and then you forget them. Oh, that's bad! they remember you. You are ungrateful!"

X

IN WHICH IT IS EXPLAINED HOW JAVERT LOST THE GAME

THE events, the reverse of which, so to speak, we have just seen, had been brought about under the simplest conditions.

When Jean Valjean, on the night of the very day that Javert arrested him at the death-bed of Fantine, escaped from the municipal prison of M—— sur M——, the police supposed that the escaped convict would start for Paris. Paris is a maelstrom in which everything is lost; and everything disappears in this whirlpool of the world as in the whirlpool of the sea. No forest conceals a man like this multitude. Fugitives of all kinds know this. They go to Paris to be swallowed up; there are swallowings-up which save. The police know it also, and it is in Paris that they search for what they have lost elsewhere. They searched there for the ex-mayor of M—— sur M——. Javert was summoned to Paris to aid in the investigation. Javert, in fact, was of great aid in the recapture of Jean Valjean. The zeal and intelligence of Javert on this occasion were remarked by M. Chabouillet, secretary of the prefecture under Count Anglès. M. Chabouillet, who had already interested himself in Javert, secured the transfer of the inspector of M—— sur M—— to the police of Paris. There Javert rendered himself in various ways, and, let us say, although the word seems unusual for such service, honorably, useful.

He thought no more of Jean Valjean—with these hounds always upon the scent, the wolf of to-day banishes the memory of the wolf of yesterday—when, in December,

1823, he read a newspaper, he who never read the newspapers; but Javert, as a monarchist, made a point of knowing the details of the triumphal entry of the "prince generalissimo" into Bayonne. Just as he finished the article which interested him, a name—the name of Jean Valjean—at the bottom of the page attracted his attention. The newspaper announced that the convict Jean Valjean was dead, and published the fact in terms so explicit that Javert had no doubt of it. He merely said: "That settles it." Then he threw aside the paper and thought no more of it.

Some time afterward it happened that a police notice was transmitted by the Prefecture of Seine-et-Oise to the Prefecture of Police of Paris in relation to the kidnapping of a child, which had taken place, it is said, under peculiar circumstances, in the commune of Montfermeil. A little girl, seven or eight years old, the notice said, who had been confided by her mother to an innkeeper of the country, had been stolen by an unknown man; this little girl answered to the name of Cosette, and was the child of a young woman named Fantine, who had died at the hospital, nobody knew when or where. This notice came under the eyes of Javert and set him to thinking.

The name of Fantine was well known to him. He remembered that Jean Valjean had actually made him—Javert—laugh aloud by asking of him a respite of three days, in order to go for the child of this creature. He recalled the fact that Jean Valjean had been arrested at Paris, at the moment he was getting into the Montfermeil diligence. Some indications had even led him to think then that it was the second time that he was entering this diligence, and that he had already, the night previous, made another excursion to the environs of this village, for he had not been seen in the village itself. What was he doing in this region of Montfermeil? Nobody could divine. Javert understood it. The daughter of Fantine was there. Jean Valjean was going after her. Now this child had been stolen by an unknown man! Who could this man be? Could it be Jean Valjean? But Jean Valjean was dead. Javert, without saying a word to any one, took the diligence at the Plat d'Etain, Cul-de-sac de Planchette, and took a trip to Montfermeil.

He expected to find great developments there; he found great obscurity.

For the first few days the Thenardiers, in their spite, had babbled the story about. The disappearance of the Lark had made some noise in the village. There were soon several versions of the story, which ended by becoming a case of kidnapping. Hence the police notice. However, when the first ebullition was over, Thenardier, with admirable instinct, very soon arrived at the conclusion that it is never useful to set in motion the procureur du roi; that the first result of his complaints in regard to the kidnapping of Cosette would be to fix upon himself, and on many business troubles which he had, the keen eye of justice. The last thing that owls wish is a candle. And first of all, how should he explain the 1,500 francs he had received? He stopped short, and enjoined secrecy upon his wife, and professed to be astonished when anybody spoke to him of the stolen child. He knew nothing about it; undoubtedly he had made some complaint at the time, that the dear little girl should be "taken away" so suddenly; he would have liked, for affection's sake, to keep her two or three days; but it was her "grandfather" who had come for her, the most natural thing in the world. He had added the grandfather, which sounded well. It was upon this story that Javert fell on reaching Montfermeil. The grandfather put Jean Valjean out of the question.

Javert, however, dropped a few questions like plummets into Thenardier's story. Who was this grandfather and what was his name? Thenardier answered with simplicity: "He is a rich farmer, I saw his passport. I believe his name is M. Guillaume Lambert."

Lambert is a very respectable, reassuring name. Javert returned to Paris.

"Jean Valjean is really dead," said he, "and I am a fool."

He had begun to forget all this story, when, in the month of March, 1824, he heard an odd person spoken of who lived in the parish of Saint-Médard, and who was called "the beggar who gives alms." This person was, it was said, a man living on his income, whose name nobody knew exactly, and who lived alone with a little girl eight years old, who knew nothing of herself except that she

came from Montfermeil. Montfermeil? This name constantly recurring, excited Javert's attention anew. An old begging police spy, formerly a beadle, to whom this person had extended his charity, added some other details. "This man was very unsociable, never going out except at night, speaking to nobody, except to the poor sometimes, and allowing nobody to get acquainted with him. He wore a horrible old yellow coat, which was worth millions, being lined all over with bank-bills." This decidedly piqued Javert's curiosity. That he might get a near view of this fantastic rich man without frightening him away, he borrowed one day of the beadle his old frock, and the place where the old spy squatted every night droning out his orisons and playing the spy as he prayed.

"The suspicious individual" did indeed come to Javert thus disguised and gave him alms; at that moment Javert raised his head, and the shock which Jean Valjean received, thinking that he recognized Javert, Javert received, thinking that he recognized Jean Valjean.

However the obscurity might have deceived him, the death of Jean Valjean was officially certified; Javert had still serious doubts; and, in case of doubt, Javert, scrupulous as he was, never seized any man by the collar.

He followed the old man to the Gorbeau House and set "the old woman" talking, which was not at all difficult. The old woman confirmed the story of the coat lined with millions, and related to him the episode of the 1,000-franc note. She had seen it! She had touched it. Javert hired a room. That very night he installed himself in it. He listened at the door of the mysterious lodger, hoping to hear the sound of his voice, but Jean Valjean perceived his candle through the keyhole and balked the spy by keeping silence.

The next day Jean Valjean decamped. But the noise of the five-franc piece which he dropped was noticed by the old woman, who, hearing money moving, suspected that he was going to move, and hastened to forewarn Javert. At night, when Jean Valjean went out, Javert was waiting for him behind the trees of the boulevard with two men.

Javert had called for assistance from the prefecture, but he had not given the name of the person he hoped

to seize. That was his secret; and he kept it for three reasons: first, because the least indiscretion might give the alarm to Jean Valjean; next, because the arrest of an old escaped convict who was reputed dead, a criminal whom the records of justice had already classed forever among malefactors of the most dangerous kind, would be a magnificent success which the old members of the Parisian police certainly would never leave to a new-comer like Javert, and he feared they would take his galley-slave away from him; finally, because Javert, being an artist, had a liking for surprises. He hated these boasted successes which are deflowered by talking of them long in advance. He liked to elaborate his masterpieces in the shade and then to unveil them suddenly afterward.

Javert had followed Jean Valjean from tree to tree, then from street corner to street corner, and had not lost sight of him a single instant; even in the moments when Jean Valjean felt himself most secure the eye of Javert was upon him. Why did not Javert arrest Jean Valjean? Because he was still in doubt.

It must be remembered that at that time the police was not exactly at its ease; it was cramped by a free press. Some arbitrary arrests, denounced by the newspapers, had been re-echoed even in the Chambers and rendered the prefecture timid. To attack individual liberty was a serious thing. The officers were afraid of making mistakes; the prefect held them responsible; an error was the loss of their place. Imagine the effect which this brief paragraph, repeated in twenty papers, would have produced in Paris: "Yesterday an old white-haired grandsire, a respectable person living on his income, who was taking a walk with his granddaughter, eight years old, was arrested and taken to the station of the prefecture as an escaped convict!"

Let us say, in addition, that Javert had his own personal scruples; the injunctions of his conscience were added to the injunctions of the prefect. He was really in doubt.

Jean Valjean turned his back and walked away in the darkness.

Sadness, trouble, anxiety, weight of cares, this new sorrow of being obliged to fly by night and to seek a chance asylum in Paris for Cosette and himself, the necessity of

adapting his pace to the pace of a child—all this, without his knowing it even, had changed Jean Valjean's gait, and impressed upon his carriage such an appearance of old age that the police itself, incarnated in Javert, could be deceived. The impossibility of approaching too near, his dress of an old preceptor of the emigration, the declaration of Thenardier, who made him a grandfather; finally, the belief in his death at the galleys, added yet more to the uncertainty which was increasing in Javert's mind.

For a moment he had an idea of asking him abruptly for his papers. But if the man were not Jean Valjean, and if the man were not a good old honest man of means, he was probably some sharper profoundly and skilfully adept in the obscure web of Parisian crime; some dangerous chief of bandits, giving alms to conceal his other talents; an old trick. He had comrades, accomplices, retreats on all hands in which he would take refuge without doubt. All these windings which he was making in the streets seemed to indicate that he was not a simple honest man. To arrest him too soon would be "to kill the goose that laid the golden eggs." What inconvenience was there in waiting? Javert was very sure that he would not escape.

He walked on, therefore, in some perplexity, questioning himself continually in regard to this mysterious personage.

It was not until quite late in the Rue de Pontoise that, thanks to the bright light which streamed from a barroom, he decidedly recognized Jean Valjean.

There are in this world two beings who can be deeply thrilled: the mother who finds her child, and the tiger who finds his prey. Javert felt this profound thrill.

As soon as he had positively recognized Jean Valjean, the formidable convict, he perceived that there were only three of them, and sent to the commissary of police of the Rue de Pontoise for additional aid. Before grasping a thorny stick men put on gloves.

This delay and stopping at the Rollin square to arrange with his men made him lose the scent. However, he had very soon guessed that Jean Valjean's first wish would be to put the river between his pursuers and himself. He bowed his head and reflected like a hound who puts his

nose to the ground to be sure of the way. Javert, with his straightforward power of instinct, went directly to the bridge of Austerlitz. A word to the toll-keeper set him right. "Have you seen a man with a little girl?" "I made him pay two sous," answered the toll-man. Javert reached the bridge in time to see Jean Valjean on the other side of the river leading Cosette across the space lighted by the moon. He saw him enter the Rue de Chemin Vert Saint Antoine, he thought of the Cul-de-sac Genrot, placed there like a trap, and of the only outlet from the Rue Droit Mur into the Petite Rue Picpus. He put out beaters, as hunters say; he sent one of his men hastily by a detour to guard that outlet. A patrol passing, on its return to the station at the arsenal, he put it in requisition and took it along with him. In such games soldiers are trumps. Moreover, it is a maxim that to take the boar requires the science of the hunter and the strength of the dogs. These combinations being effected, feeling that Jean Valjean was caught between the Cul-de-sac Genrot on the right, his officer on the left, and himself, Javert, in the rear, he took a pinch of snuff.

Then he began to play. He enjoyed a ravishing and infernal moment; he let this man go before him, knowing that he had him, but desiring to put off as long as possible the moment of arresting him, delighting to feel that he was caught, and to see him free, fondly gazing upon him with the rapture of the spider which lets the fly buzz, or the cat which lets the mouse run. The paw and the talon find a monstrous pleasure in the quivering of the animal imprisoned in their grasp. What delight there is in this suffocation!

Javert was rejoicing. The links of his chain were solidly welded. He was sure of success; he had now only to close his hand.

Accompanied as he was, the very idea of resistance was impossible, however energetic, however vigorous, and however desperate Jean Valjean might be.

Javert advanced slowly, sounding and ransacking on his way all the recesses of the street as he would the pockets of a thief.

When he reached the centre of the web the fly was no longer there.

Imagine his exasperation.

He questioned his sentinel at the corner of the Rue Droit Mur and Rue Picpus; this officer who had remained motionless at his post had not seen the man pass.

It happens sometimes that a stag breaks with the head covered—that is to say, escapes, although the hound is upon him; then the oldest hunters know not what to say. Duvivier, Ligniville, and Desprez are at fault. On the occasion of a mishap of this sort, Artonge exclaimed: "It is not a stag, it is a sorcerer."

Javert would fain have uttered the same cry.

His disappointment had a moment of despair and fury.

It is certain that Napoleon blundered in the campaign in Russia, that Alexander blundered in the war in India, that Cæsar blundered in the African war, that Cyrus blundered in the war in Scythia, and that Javert blundered in this campaign against Jean Valjean. He did wrong, perhaps, in hesitating to recognize the old galley-slave. The first glance should have been enough for him. He did wrong in not seizing him without ceremony in the old building. He did wrong in not arresting him when he positively recognized him in the Rue de Pontoise. He did wrong to hold a council with his aids, in full moonlight, in the Rollin square. Certainly advice is useful, and it is well to know and to question those of the dogs which are worthy of credit; but the hunter can not take too many precautions when he is chasing restless animals, like the wolf and the convict. Javert, by too much forethought in setting his bloodhounds on the track, alarmed his prey by giving him wind of the pursuit, and allowed him the start. He did wrong, above all, when he had regained the scent at the bridge of Austerlitz, to play the formidable and puerile game of holding such a man at the end of a thread. He thought himself stronger than he was, and believed he could play mouse with a lion. At the same time he esteemed himself too weak when he deemed it necessary to obtain a reinforcement. Fatal precaution, loss of precious time. Javert made all these blunders, and yet he was none the less one of the wisest and most correct detectives that ever existed. He was, in the full force of the term, what in venery is called "a gentle dog." But who is perfect?

Great strategists have their eclipses.

Great blunders are often made, like large ropes, of a multitude of fibres. Take the cable thread by thread, take separately all the little determining motives, you break them one after another, and you say: that is all. Wind them and twist them together they become an enormity; Attila hesitating between Marcian in the east and Valentinian in the west; Hannibal delaying at Capua; Danton falling to sleep at Arcis sur Aube.

However this may be, even at the moment when he perceived that Jean Valjean had escaped him, Javert did not lose his presence of mind. Sure that the convict who had broken his ban could not be far away, he set watches, arranged traps and ambushes, and beat the quarter the night through. The first thing he saw was the displacement of the lamp, the rope of which was cut. Precious indications, which led him astray, however, by directing all his researches toward the Cul-de-sac Genrot. There are in that cul-de-sac some rather low walls which face upon gardens the limits of which extend to some very large uncultivated grounds. Jean Valjean evidently must have fled that way. The fact is, that if he had penetrated into the Cul-de-sac Genrot a little further he would have done so, and would have been lost. Javert explored these gardens and these grounds as if he were searching for a needle.

At daybreak he left two intelligent men on the watch and returned to the prefecture of the police, crestfallen as a spy who had been caught by a thief.

BOOK SIX—PETIT PICPUS

I

PETITE RUE PICPUS, NUMBER 62

NOTHING resembled more closely, half a century ago, the commonest *porte-cochère* of the time than the *porte-cochère* of No. 62 Petite Rue Picpus. This door was usually half open in the most attractive manner, disclosing two things which have nothing very funereal about them: a court surrounded with walls bedecked with vines and the face of a lounging porter. Above the rear wall large trees could be seen. When a beam of sunshine enlivened the court, when a glass of wine enlivened the porter, it was difficult to pass by No. 62 Petite Rue Picpus without carrying away a pleasant idea. It was, however, a gloomy place of which you had had a glimpse.

The door smiled; the house prayed and wept.

If you succeeded, which was not easy, in passing the porter—which for almost everybody was even impossible, for there was an *open sesame* which you must know—if, having passed the porter, you entered on the right a little vestibule which led to a stairway shut in between two walls, and so narrow that but one person could pass at a time; if you did not allow yourself to be frightened by the yellow wall-paper with the chocolate surbase that extended along the stairs, if you ventured to go up, you passed by a first broad stair, then a second, and reached the second story in a hall where the yellow hue and the chocolate plinth followed you with a peaceful persistency. Staircase and hall were lighted by two handsome windows. The hall made a sudden turn and became dark. If you doubled that cape you came, in a few steps, to a door, all the more mysterious that it was not quite closed. You pushed it open, and found yourself in a little room about six feet square, the floor tiled, scoured, neat and cold, and the walls hung with fifteen-sou paper, nankeen colored paper with green flowers. A dull white light came from a large window

with small panes which was at the left, and which took up the whole width of the room. You looked, you saw no one; you listened, you heard no step and no human sound. The wall was bare; the room had not furniture, not even a chair.

You looked again, and you saw in the wall, opposite the door, a quadrangular opening about a foot square, covered with a grate of iron bars crossing one another, black, knotted, solid, which formed squares—I had almost said meshes—less than an inch across. The little green flowers on the nankeen paper came calmly and in order to these iron bars without being frightened or scattered by the dismal contact. In case any living being had been so marvelously slender as to attempt to get in or out by the square hole, this grate would have prevented it. It did not let the body pass, but it did let the eye pass—that is to say, the mind. This seemed to have been cared for, for it had been doubled by a sheet of tin inserted in the wall a little behind it and pierced with a thousand holes more microscopic than those of a skimmer. At the bottom of this plate there was an opening cut exactly like the mouth of a letter-box. A piece of broad tape attached to a bell hung at the right of the grated opening.

If you pulled this tape, a bell tinkled and a voice was heard, very near you, which startled you: "Who is there?" asked the voice.

It was a woman's voice, a gentle voice, so gentle that it was mournful.

Here again there was a magic word which you must know. If you did not know it, the voice was heard no more, and the wall again became silent as if the wild obscurity of the sepulchre had been on the other side.

If you knew the word, the voice added: "Enter at the right."

You then noticed at your right, opposite the window, a glazed door surmounted by a glazed sash and painted gray. You lifted the latch, you passed through the door, and you felt exactly the same impression as when you enter a grated box at the theatre before the grate is lowered and the lights are lit. You were, in fact, in a sort of theatre box, hardly made visible by the dim light of the glass door, narrow, furnished with two old chairs and a piece of

tattered straw matting—a genuine box, with its front to lean upon, upon which was a tablet of black wood. This box was grated, but it was not a grate of gilded wood as at the opera; it was a monstrous trellis of iron bars frightfully tangled together, and bolted to the wall by enormous bolts which resembled clinched fists.

After a few minutes, when your eyes began to get accustomed to this cavernous light, you tried to look through the grate, but could not see more than six inches beyond. There you saw a barrier of black shutters, secured and strengthened by wooden cross-bars painted gingerbread color. These shutters were jointed, divided into long, slender strips and covered the whole length of the grate. They were always closed.

In a few moments you heard a voice calling to you from behind these shutters and saying: "I am here. What do you want of me?"

It was a loved voice, perhaps, sometimes an adored one. You saw nobody. You hardly heard a breath. It seemed as if it were a ghostly voice speaking to you across the portal of the tomb.

If you appeared under certain necessary conditions, very rare, the narrow strip of one of these shutters opened in front of you, and the ghostly voice became an apparition. Behind the grate, behind the shutter, you perceived, as well as the grate permitted, a head, of which you saw only the mouth and chin; the rest was covered with a black veil. You caught a glimpse of a black guimpe and an ill-defined form covered with a black shroud. This head spoke to you, but did not look at you, and never smiled at you.

The light which came from behind you was disposed in such a wise that you saw her in the light and she saw you in the shade. This light was symbolic.

Meantime your eyes gazed eagerly through this aperture thus opened into this place closed against all observation.

A deep obscurity enveloped this form thus clad in mourning. Your eyes strained into this obscurity, and sought to distinguish what was about the apparition. In a little while you perceived that you saw nothing. What you saw was night, void, darkness, a wintry mist mingled

with a sepulchral vapor, a sort of terrifying quiet, a silence from which you distinguished nothing, not even sighs —a shade in which you discerned nothing, not even phantoms.

What you saw was the interior of a cloister.

It was the interior of that stern and gloomy house that was called the Convent of the Bernardines of the Perpetual Adoration. This box where you were was the parlor. This voice, the first that spoke to you, was the voice of the portress, who was always seated, motionless and silent, on the other side of the wall, near the square aperture, defended by the iron grate and the plate with the thousand holes, as by a double visor.

The obscurity in which the grated box was sunk arose from this, that the locutory, which had a window on the side toward the outside world, had none on the convent side. Profane eyes must see nothing of this sacred place.

There was something, however, beyond this shade; there was a light; there was a life within this death. Although this convent was more inaccessible than any other, we shall endeavor to penetrate it, and to take the reader with us, and to relate, as fully as we may, something which story-tellers have never seen. and consequently have never related.

II

THE OBEDIENCE OF MARTIN VERGA

THIS convent, which in 1824 had existed for long years, in the Petite Rue Picpus, was a community of Bernardines of the Obedience of Martin Verga.

These Bernardines, consequently, were attached, not to Clairvaux, like other Bernardines, but to Cîteaux, like the Benedictines. In other words, they were subjects, not of St. Bernard, but of St. Benedict.

Whoever is at all familiar with old folios knows that Martin Verga founded in 1425 a congregation of Bernardine-Benedictines, having their chief convent at Salamanca and an affiliation at Alcalá.

This congregation had put out branches in all the Catholic countries of Europe.

These grafts of one order upon another are not unusual

in the Latin Church. To speak only of the single order of St. Benedict, which is here in question—to this order are attached, without counting the Obedience of Martin Verga, four congregations; two in Italy, Monte Cassino and Santa Giustina of Padua; two in France, Cluny and St. Maur; and nine orders, Vallombrosa, Grammant, the Cœlestines, the Camaldules, the Carthusians, the Humiliati, the Olivetans, the Sylvestrines, and finally Cîteaux; for Cîteaux itself, the trunk of other orders, is only an offshoot from St. Benedict. Cîteaux dates from St. Robert, Abbé of Molesme, in the diocese of Langres in 1098. Now, it was in 529 that the devil, who had retired to the desert of Subiaco (he was old; had he become a hermit?), was driven from the ancient temple of Apollo, where he was living with St. Benedict, then seventeen years old.

Next to the rules of the Carmelites, who go barefooted, wear a withe about their throat, and never sit down, the most severe rules are those of the Bernardine-Benedictines of Martin Verga. They are clothed with a black guimpe, which, according to the express command of St. Benedict, comes up to the chin. A serge dress with wide sleeves, a large wooden veil, the guimpe which rises to the chin, cut square across the breast, and the fillet which comes down to the eyes, constitute their dress. It is all black, except the fillet, which is white. The novices wear the same dress all in white. The professed nuns have in addition a rosary by their side.

The Bernardine-Benedictines of Martin Verga perform the devotion of the perpetual adoration, as do the Benedictines called Ladies of the Holy Sacrament, who, at the commencement of this century, had at Paris two houses, one at the Temple, the other in the Rue Neuve Sainte Geneviéve. In other respects, the Bernardine-Benedictines of the Petit Picpus, of whom we are speaking, was an entirely separate order from the Ladies of the Holy Sacrament, whose cloisters were in the Rue Neuve Sainte Geneviéve and at the Temple. There were many differences in their rules, there was some in their costume. The Bernardine-Benedictines of the Petit Picpus wore a black guimpe, and the Benedictines of the Holy Sacrament and of the Rue Neuve Sainte Geneviéve wore a white one, and had, moreover, upon their breast a crucifix about three

inches long in silver or copper gilt. The nuns of the Petit Picpus did not wear this crucifix. The devotion of the Perpetual Adoration, common to the house of the Petit Picpus and to the house of the Temple, left the two orders perfectly distinct. There is a similarity only in this respect between the Ladies of the Holy Sacrament and the Bernardines of Martin Verga, even as there is a similitude in the study and the glorification of all the mysteries relative to the infancy, the life, and the death of Jesus Christ, and to the Virgin, between two orders widely separated and occasionally inimical; the Oratory of Italy, established at Florence by Philip di Neri, and the Oratory of France, established at Paris by Pierre de Bérulle. The Oratory of Paris claims the precedence, Philip di Neri being only a saint, and Bérulle being a cardinal.

Let us return to the severe Spanish rules of Martin Verga.

The Bernardine-Benedictines of this obedience abstain from meat all the year round, fast during lent and many other days peculiar to them, rise out of their first sleep at one o'clock in the morning to read their breviary and chant matins until three, sleep in coarse woolen sheets at all seasons and upon straw, use no baths, never light any fire, scourge themselves every Friday, observe the rule of silence, speak to one another only at recreations, which are very short, and wear hair-cloth chemises for six months, from the 14th of September, the exaltation of the holy cross, until Easter. These six months are a moderation—the rules say all the year; but this hair-cloth chemise, insupportable in the heat of summer, produced fevers and nervous spasms. It became necessary to limit its use. Even with this mitigation, after the 14th of September, when the nuns put on this chemise, they have three or four days of fever. Obedience, poverty, chastity, continuance in cloister, such are their vows, rendered much more difficult of fulfilment by the rules.

The prioress is elected for three years by the mothers, who are called *vocal mothers,* because they have a voice in the chapter. A prioress can be re-elected but twice, which fixes the longest possible reign of a prioress at nine years.

They never see the officiating priest, who is always concealed from them by a woolen curtain nine feet high.

During sermon, when the preacher is in the chapel, they drop their veil over their face; they must always speak low, walk with their eyes on the ground and their head bowed down. But one man can enter the convent, the archbishop of the diocese.

There is, indeed, one other, the gardener; but he is always an old man, and in order that he may be perpetually alone in the garden, and that the nuns may be warned to avoid him, a bell is attached to his knee.

They are subject to the prioress with an absolute and passive submission. It is canonical subjection in all its abnegation. As at the voice of Christ, *ut voci Christi* at a nod, at the first signal *ad nutum, ad primum, signum,* promptly, with pleasure, with perseverance, with a certain blind obedience, *promptè hilariter perseveranter et cæcâ quâdam obedientiâ,* like the file in the workman's hands, *quasi limam in manibus fabri,* forbidden to read or write without express permission, *legere vel scribere non addiscerit sine expressâ superioris licentiâ.*

Each one of them in turn performed what they call "the reparation." The reparation is prayer for all sins, for all faults, for all disorders, for all violations, for all iniquities, for all the crimes which are committed upon the earth. During twelve consecutive hours, from four o'clock in the afternoon till four o'clock in the morning, or from four o'clock in the morning till four o'clock in the afternoon, the sister who performs the reparation remains on her knees upon the stone before the holy sacrament, her hands clasped and a rope around her neck. When fatigue becomes insupportable she prostrates herself, her face against the marble and her arms crossed; this is all her relief. In this attitude she prays for all the guilty in the universe. This is grand even to sublimity.

As this act is performed before a post on the top of which a taper is burning, they say indiscriminately, "to perform the reparation," or "to be at the post." The nuns even prefer, from humility, this latter expression, which involves an idea of punishment and of abasement.

The performance of the reparation is a process in which the whole soul is absorbed. The sister at the post would not turn were a thunderbolt to fall behind her.

Moreover, there is always a nun on her knees before the

holy sacrament. They remain for an hour. They are relieved like soldiers standing sentry. That is the perpetual adoration.

The prioresses and the mothers almost always have names of peculiar solemnity, recalling not the saints and the martyrs, but moments in the life of Christ, like Mother Nativity, Mother Conception, Mother Presentation, Mother Passion. The names of saints, however, are not prohibited.

When you see them you see only their mouth.

They all have yellow teeth. Never did a toothbrush enter the convent. To brush the teeth is the top round of a ladder, the bottom round of which is to lose the soul.

They never say "my" or "mine." They have nothing of their own and must cherish nothing. They say "our" of everything, thus: "our veil," "our chaplet"; if they speak of their chemise they say "our chemise." Sometimes they become attached to some little object, to a prayer-book, a relic, or a sacred medal. As soon as they perceive that they are beginning to cherish this object they must give it up. They remember the reply of St. Theresa, to whom a great lady, at the moment of entering her order, said: "Permit me, mother, to send for a Holy Bible, which I cherish very much." "Ah! you cherish something! In that case do not enter our house."

None are allowed to shut themselves up and to have a *home,* a *room.* They live in open cells. When they meet one another, one says: "Praise and adoration to the most holy sacrament of the altar." The other responds: "Forever." The same ceremony when one knocks at another's door. Hardly is the door touched when a gentle voice is heard from the other side, hastily saying: "Forever!" Like all rituals, this becomes mechanical from habit, and one sometimes says "forever" before the other has had time to say, what is, indeed, rather lengthy, "Praise and adoration to the most holy sacrament of the altar!"

Among the Vicitandines, the one who comes in says: "Ave Maria," and the one to whose cell she comes, says: "Gratiâ plena." This is their good day, which is, in fact, "graceful."

At each hour of the day three supplementary strokes sound from the bell of the convent church. At this signal

prioress, mothers, professed nuns, sister servants, novices, postulants, all break off from what they are saying, doing, or thinking and say at once, if it is five o'clock, for example: "At five o'clock, and at all times, praise and adoration to the most holy sacrament of the altar!" If it is eight o'clock: "At eight o'clock and at all times," etc., and so on, according to whatever hour it may be.

This custom, which is intended to interrupt the thoughts and to lead them back constantly to God, exists in many communities; the formula only varies. Thus, at the infant Jesus, they say: "At the present hour, and at all hours, may the love of Jesus enkindle my heart!"

The Bernardine-Benedictines of Martin Verga, cloistered fifty years ago in the Petit Picpus, chant the offices in a grave psalmody, pure, plain chant, and always in a loud voice for the whole duration of the office. Wherever there is an asterisk in the missal they make a pause and say in a low tone: "Jesus-Mary-Joseph." For the office for the dead they take so low a pitch that it is difficult for female voices to reach it. The effect is thrilling and tragical.

Those of the Petit Picpus had had a vault made under their high altar for the burial of their community. The government, as they call it, does not permit corpses to be deposited in this vault. They, therefore, were taken from the convent when they died. This was an affliction to them and horrified them as if it were a violation.

They had obtained—small consolation—the privilege of being buried at a special hour and in a special place in the old Vaugirard cemetery, which was located in ground formerly belonging to the community.

On Thursday these nuns heard high mass, vespers, and all the offices, the same as on Sunday. They, moreover, scrupulously observed all the little feast days, unknown to the people of the world, of which the Church was formerly lavish in France, and is still lavish in Spain and Italy. Their attendance at chapel is interminable. As to the number and duration of their prayers we can not give a better idea than by quoting the frank words of one of themselves: "The prayers of the postulants are frightful, the prayers of the novices worse, and the prayers of the professed nuns still worse."

Once a week the chapter assembles; the prioress presides, the mothers attend. Each sister comes in her turn, kneels upon the stone and confesses aloud, before all, the faults and sins which she has committed during the week. The mothers consult together after each confession and announce the penalty aloud.

In addition to open confession, for which they reserve all serious faults, they have for venial faults what they call the *coulpe.* To perform the coulpe is to prostrate yourself on your face during the office, before the prioress, until she, who is never spoken of except as "our mother," indicates to the sufferer, by a gentle rap upon the side of her stall, that she may rise. The coulpe is performed for very petty things; a glass broken, a veil torn, an involuntary delay of a few seconds at an office, a false note in church, etc.—these are enough for the coulpe. The coulpe is entirely spontaneous; it is the "culpable" herself (this word is here etymologically in its place) who judges herself and who inflicts it upon herself. On feast-days and Sundays there are four chorister mothers who sing the offices before a large desk with four music stands. One day a mother chorister intoned a psalm which commenced by *Ecce,* and, instead of *Ecce,* she pronounced in a loud voice these three notes: *ut, si, sol;* for this absence of mind she underwent a coulpe which lasted through the whole office. What rendered the fault peculiarly enormous was that the chapter laughed.

When a nun is called to the locutory, be it even the prioress, she drops her veil, it will be remembered, in such a way as to show nothing but her mouth.

The prioress alone can communicate with strangers. The others can see only their immediate family, and that very rarely. If by chance persons from without present themselves to see a nun whom they have known or loved in the world, a formal negotiation is necessary. If it be a woman, permission may be sometimes accorded; the nun comes and is spoken to through the shutters, which are never opened except for a mother or sister. It is unnecessary to say that permission is always refused to men.

Such are the rules of St. Benedict, rendered more severe by Martin Verga.

These nuns are not joyous, rosy and cheerful, as are

often the daughters of other orders. They are pale and serious. Between 1825 and 1830 three became insane.

III

SEVERITIES

A POSTULANCY of at least two years is required, often four; a novitiate of four years. It is rare that the final vows can be pronounced under twenty-three or twenty-four years. The Bernardine-Benedictines of Martin Verga admit no widows into their order.

They subject themselves in their cells to many unknown self-mortifications of which they must never speak.

The day on which a novice makes her profession she is dressed in her finest attire, with her head decked with white roses and her hair glossy and curled; then she prostrates herself; a great black veil is spread over her, and the office for the dead is chanted. The nuns then divide into two files, one file passes near her, saying in plaintive accents: "Our sister is dead," and the other file responds in ringing tones: "Living in Jesus Christ!"

At the period to which this history relates a boarding-school was attached to the convent. A school of noble young girls, for the most part rich, among whom were noticeable Mdlles. de Sainte Aulaire and de Bélissen, and an English girl bearing the illustrious Catholic name of Talbot. These young girls, reared by these nuns between four walls, grew up in horror of the world and of the age. One of them said to us one day: "To see the pavement of the street made me shiver from head to foot." They were dressed in blue with a white cap, and a holy spirit, in silver, copper, or gilt, upon their breast. On certain grand feast-days, particularly on St. Martha's day, they were allowed, as a high favor and a supreme pleasure, to dress as nuns and perform the offices and ritual of St. Benedict for a whole day. At first the professed nuns lent them their black garments. That appeared profane and the prioress forbade it. This loan was permitted only to novices. It is remarkable that these representations, undoubtedly tolerated and encouraged in the convent by a secret spirit of proselytism, and to give these children some foretaste of the holy dress were a real pleasure and

a genuine recreation for the scholars. They simply amused themselves. It was new; it was a change. Candid reasons of childhood, which do not succeed, however, in making us, mundane people, comprehend the felicity of holding a holy sprinkler in the hand, and remaining standing entire hours singing in quartet before a desk.

The pupils, austerities excepted, conformed to all the ritual of the convent. There are young women, who returned to the world, and after several years of marriage have not yet succeeded in breaking off the habit of saying hastily, whenever there is a knock at the door: "Forever!" Like the nuns, the boarders saw their relatives only in the locutory. Even their mothers were not permitted to embrace them. Strictness upon this point was carried to the following extent: One day a young girl was visited by her mother accompanied by a little sister three years old. The young girl wept, for she wished very much to kiss her sister. Impossible. She begged that the child should at least be permitted to pass her little hand through the bars that she might kiss it. This was refused almost with indignation.

IV

GAYETIES

THESE young girls have none the less filled this solemn house with charming reminiscences.

At certain hours childhood sparkled in this cloister. The hour of recreation struck. The door turned upon its hinges. The birds said: "Good! here are the children!" An irruption of youth inundated this garden, which was cut by walks in the form of a cross, like a shroud. Radiant faces, white foreheads, frank eyes full of cheerful light, auroras of all sorts scattered through this darkness. After the chants, the bell-ringing, the knells and the offices, all at once this hum of little girls burst forth sweeter than the hum of bees. The hive of joy opened, and each one brought her honey. They played, they called to one another, they formed groups, they ran; pretty little white teeth chattered in the corners; veils from a distance watched over the laughter, shadows spying the sunshine; but what matter! They sparkled and they laughed. These four dismal

walls had their moments of bewilderment. They, too, shared, dimly lighted up by the reflection of so much joy, in this sweet and swarming whirl. It was like a shower of roses upon this mourning. The young girls frolicked under the eyes of the nuns; the gaze of sinlessness does not disturb innocence. Thanks to these children, among so many hours of austerity, there was one hour of artlessness. The little girls skipped, the larger ones danced. In this cloister play was mingled with heaven. Nothing was so transporting and superb as all these fresh, blooming souls. Homer might have laughed there with Perrault, and there were, in this dark garden, enough of youth, health, murmurs, cries, uproar, pleasure, and happiness to smooth the wrinkles from off all grandames, those of the epic as well as the tale, those of the throne as well as the hut, from Hecuba to Mother Goose.

In this house, more than anywhere else, perhaps have been heard these children's sayings, which have so much grace, and which make one laugh with a laugh full of thought. It was within these four forbidding walls that a child of five years exclaimed one day: "Mother, a great girl has just told me that I have only nine years and ten months more to stay here. How glad I am!"

Here, also, that this memorable dialogue occurred:

A Mother—"What are you crying for, my child?"

The Child (six years old), sobbing—"I told Alice I knew my French history. She says I don't know it, and I do know it."

Alice, larger (nine years)—"No, she doesn't know it."

The Mother—"How is that, my child?"

Alice—"She told me to open the book, anywhere, and ask her any question there was in the book, and she could answer it."

"Well?"

"She didn't answer it."

"Let us see. What did you ask her?"

"I opened the book anywhere, just as she said, and I asked the first question I found."

"And what was the question?"

"It was, 'What happened next?' "

Here this profound observation was made about a rather dainty parrot, which belonged to a lady boarder: "Isn't

she genteel? she picks off the top of her tart like a lady." From one of the tiles of the cloister the following confession was picked up, written beforehand so as not to be forgotten, by a little sinner seven years of age:

"Father, I accuse myself of having been avaricious.

"Father, I accuse myself of having been adulterous.

"Father, I accuse myself of having raised my eyes toward the gentlemen."

Upon one of the grassy banks of this garden the following story was improvised by a rosy mouth, six years old, and listened to by blue eyes four and five years old:

"There were three little chickens who lived in a country where there were a good many flowers. They picked the flowers and they put them in their pockets. After that they picked the leaves and they put them in their playthings. There was a wolf in the country, and there was a good many woods; and the wolf was in the woods, and he ate up the little chickens."

And again, this other poem:

"There was a blow with a stick.

"It was Punchinello who struck the cat.

"That didn't do him any good; it did her harm.

"Then a lady put Punchinello in prison."

There, also, these sweet and heartrending words were said by a little foundling that the convent was rearing through charity. She heard the others talking about their mothers and she murmured in her little place: "For my part, my mother was not there when I was born."

There was a fat portress who was always to be seen hurrying about the corridors with her bunch of keys, and whose name was Sister Agatha. The great big girls—over ten—called her Agathocles.

The refectory, a large, oblong room, which received light only from a cloister window with a fluted arch opening on a level with the garden, was dark and damp, and, as the children said, full of beasts. All the surrounding places furnished it their contingents of insects. Each of its four corners had received, in the language of the pupils, a peculiar and expressive name. There was the spiders' corner, the caterpillars' corner, the wood-lices' corner, and the crickets' corner. The crickets' corner was near the kitchen, and was highly esteemed. It was not so cold as

the others. From the refectory the names had passed to the school-room, and served to distinguish there, as at the old Mazarin College, four nations. Each pupil belonged to one of these four nations, according to the corner of the refectory in which she sat at meals. One day the archbishop, making his pastoral visit, saw enter the class which he was passing a pretty little blushing girl, with beautiful, fair hair; and he asked another scholar, a charming, fresh-cheeked brunette, who was near him:

"What is this little girl?"

"She is a spider, monseigneur."

"Pshaw! and this other one?"

"She is a cricket."

"And that one?"

"She is a caterpillar."

"Indeed! And what are you?"

"I am a wood-louse, monseigneur."

Every house of this kind has its peculiarities. At the commencement of this century, Ecouen was one of those serene and graceful places where, in a shade which was almost august, the childhood of young girls was passed. At Ecouen, by way of rank in the procession of the holy sacrament, they made a distinction between the virgins and the florists. There were also "the canopies and the censers," the former carrying the cords of the canopy, the latter swinging the censers before the holy sacrament. The flowers returned of right to the florists. Four "virgins" walked at the head of the procession. On the morning of the great day it was not uncommon to hear the question in the dormitory: "Who is a virgin?"

Mme. Campan relates this saying of a "little girl" seven years old to a "great girl" of sixteen, who took the head of the procession, while she, the little one, remained in the rear: "You're a virgin, you are; but I am not."

V

DISTRACTIONS

ABOVE the door of the refectory was written in large, black letters, this prayer, which was called "the white paternoster," and which possessed the virtue of leading people straight into paradise:

"Little white paternoster, which God made, which God said, which God laid in paradise. At night, on going to bed, I finded [*sic*] three angels lying on my bed, one at the foot, two at the head, the good Virgin Mary in the middle, who to me said that I should went to bed, and nothing suspected. The good God is my father, the Holy Virgin is my mother, the three apostles are my brothers, the three virgins are my sisters. The chemise in which God was born, my body is enveloped in; the cross of St. Marguerite on my breast is writ; Mme. l'Virgin goes away through the fields, weeping for God, meeted M. St. John. M. St. John, where do you come from? I come from Ave Salus. You have not seen the good God, have you? He is on the tree of the cross, his feet hanging, his hands nailing, a little hat of white thorns upon his head. Whoever shall say this three times at night, three times in the morning, will win paradise in the end."

In 1827 this characteristic orison had disappeared from the wall under a triple layer of paper. It is fading away to this hour in the memory of some young girls of that day, old ladies now.

A large crucifix hanging upon the wall completed the decoration of this refectory, the only door of which, as we believe we have said, opened upon the garden. Two narrow tables, at the sides of each of which were two wooden benches, extended along the refectory in parallel lines from one end to the other. The walls were white and the tables black; these two mourning colors are the only variety in convents. The meals were coarse, and the diet of even the children strict. A single plate, meat and vegetables together, or salt fish, constituted the fare. This brief bill of fare was, however, an exception reserved for the scholars alone. The children ate in silence, under the watchful eyes of the mother for the week, who, from time to time, if a fly ventured to hum or to buzz contrary to rule, noisily opened and shut a wooden book. This silence was seasoned with the "Lives of the Saints," read in a loud voice from a little reading-desk placed at the foot of a crucifix. The reader was a large pupil, selected for the week. There were placed at intervals along the bare table glazed earthen bowls, in which each pupil washed her cup and dish herself, and sometimes threw refuse bits, tough

meat or tainted fish; this was punished. These bowls were called water basins.

A child who broke the silence made a "cross with her tongue." Where? On the floor. She licked the tiles. Dust, that end of all joys, was made to chastise these poor little rosebuds when guilty of prattling.

There was a book in the convent, which is the only copy ever printed, and which it is forbidden to read. It is the "Rules of St. Benedict"; arcana into which no profane eye must penetrate. *Nemo regulas, seu constitutiones nostras, externis communicabit.*

The scholars succeeded one day in purloining this book, and began to read it eagerly, a reading often interrupted by fears of being caught, which made them close the volume very suddenly. But from this great risk they derived small pleasure. A few unintelligible pages about the sins of young boys were what they thought "most interesting."

They played in one walk of the garden, along which were a few puny fruit trees. In spite of the close watch and the severity of the punishments, when the wind had shaken the trees they sometimes succeeded in furtively picking up a green apple, a half-rotten apricot, or a worm-eaten pear. But I will let a letter speak, which I have at hand—a letter written twenty-five years ago by a former pupil, now Mme. l'Duchess of ——, one of the most elegant women of Paris—I quote verbatim: "We hide our pear or our apple as we can. When we go up to spread the covers on our beds before supper, we put them under our pillows and at night eat them in bed; and when we can not do that we eat them in the closets." This was one of their most vivid pleasures.

At another time, also on the occasion of a visit of the archbishop to the convent, one of the young girls, Mdlle. Bouchard, a descendant of the Montmorencies, wagered that she would ask leave of absence for a day, a dreadful thing in a community so austere. The wager was accepted, but no one of those who took it believed she would dare do it. When the opportunity came, as the archbishop was passing before the scholars, Mdlle. Bouchard, to the indescribable dismay of her companions, left the ranks and said: "Monseigneur, leave of absence for a day?" Mdlle. Bouchard was tall and fresh-looking, with the prettiest

little rosy face in the world. M. de Quélen smiled and said: "How now, my dear child, leave of absence for a day! Three days, if you like. I grant you three days." The prioress could do nothing; the archbishop had spoken. A scandal to the convent, but a joyful thing for the school. Imagine the effect.

This rigid cloister was not, however, so well walled in that the life of the passions of the outside world, that drama, that romance even, did not penetrate it. To prove this we will merely state briefly an actual, incontestable fact, which, however, has in itself no relation to our story, not being attached to it even by a thread. We mention this merely to complete the picture of the convent in the mind of the reader.

There was about that time, then, in the convent a mysterious person, not a nun, who was treated with great respect, and who was called Mme. Albertine. Nothing was known of her, except that she was insane, and that in the world she was supposed to be dead. There were, it was said, involved in her story some pecuniary arrangements necessary for a great marriage.

This woman, hardly thirty years old, a beautiful brunette, stared wildly with her large black eyes. Was she looking at anything? It was doubtful. She glided along rather than walked; she never spoke; it was not quite certain that she breathed. Her nostrils were as thin and livid as if she had heaved her last sigh. To touch her hand was like touching snow. She had a strange, spectral grace. Wherever she came all were cold. One day a sister seeing her pass said to another: "She passes for dead." "Perhaps she is," answered the other.

Many stories were told about Mme. Albertine. She was the eternal subject of curiosity of the boarders. There was in the chapel a gallery which was called l'Œil-de-Bœuf. In this gallery, which had only a circular opening, an œil-de-bœuf, Mme. Albertine attended the offices. She was usually alone there, because from this gallery, which was elevated, the preacher or the officiating priest could be seen, which was forbidden to the nuns. One day the pulpit was occupied by a young priest of high rank, the Duke de Rohan, peer of France, who was an officer of the Mousquetaires Rouges in 1815, when he was Prince de

Léon, and who died afterward in 1830, a cardinal and archbishop of Besançon. This was the first time that M. de Rohan had preached in the convent of the Petit Picpus. Mme. Albertine ordinarily attended the sermons and the offices with perfect calmness and complete silence. On that day, as soon as she saw M. de Rohan, she half rose, and, in all the stillness of the chapel, exclaimed: "What? Auguste!" The whole community were astounded and turned their heads; the preacher raised his eyes, but Mme. Albertine had fallen back into her motionless silence. A breath from the world without, a glimmer of life had passed for a moment over that dead and icy form, then all had vanished, and the lunatic had again become a corpse.

These two words, however, set everybody in the convent who could speak to chattering. How many things there were in that "What? Auguste!" How many revelations! M. de Rohan's name was, in fact, Auguste. It was clear that Mme. Albertine came from the highest society, since she knew M. de Rohan; that she had occupied a high position herself, since she spoke of so great a noble so familiarly; and that she had some connection with him, of relationship, perhaps, but beyond all doubt very intimate, since she knew his "pet name."

Two very severe duchesses, Mme. de Choiseul and Mme. de Serent, often visited the community, to which they doubtless were admitted by virtue of the privilege of *magnates mulieres,* greatly to the terror of the school. When the two old ladies passed all the poor young girls trembled and lowered their eyes.

M. de Rohan was, moreover, without knowing it, the object of the attention of the schoolgirls. He had just at that time been made, while waiting for the episcopacy, grand-vicar of the Archbishop of Paris. He was in the habit of coming rather frequently to chant the offices in the chapel of the nuns of the Petit Picpus. None of the young recluses could see him, on account of the serge curtain, but he had a gentle, penetrating voice, which they came to recognize and distinguish. He had been a mousquetaire, and then he was said to be very agreeable, with beautiful chestnut hair, which he wore in curls, and a large girdle of magnificent moiré, while his black cassock was of

the most elegant cut in the world. All these girlish imaginations were very much occupied with him.

No sound from without penetrated the convent. There was, however, one year when the sound of a flute was heard. This was an event, and the pupils of the time remember it yet.

It was a flute on which somebody in the neighborhood was playing. This flute always played the same air—an air long since forgotten: "My Zétulba, come reign o'er my soul," and they heard it two or three times a day. The young girls passed hours in listening, the mothers were distracted, heads grew giddy, punishments were exhausted. This lasted for several months. The pupils were all more or less in love with the unknown musician. Each one imagined herself Zétulba. The sound of the flute came from the direction of the Rue Droit Mur; they would have given everything, sacrificed everything, dared everything to see, were it only for a second, to catch a glimpse of the "young man" who played so deliciously on that flute, and who, without suspecting it, was playing at the same time upon all their hearts. There were some who escaped by a back door, and climbed up to the third story on the Rue Droit Mur, incurring days of suffering in the endeavor to see him. Impossible. One went so far as to reach her arm above her head through the grate and wave her white handkerchief. Two were bolder still. They found means to climb to the top of a roof, and, risking themselves there, they finally succeeded in seeing the "young man." He was an old gentleman of the emigration, ruined and blind, who was playing upon the flute in his garret to while away the time.

VI

THE LITTLE CONVENT

THERE were in this inclosure of the Petit Picpus three perfectly distinct buildings; the great convent, in which the nuns lived; the school building, in which the pupils lodged, and, finally, what was called the little convent. This was a detached building, with a garden, in which dwelt in common many old nuns, of various orders,

remnants of cloisters destroyed by the revolution; a gathering of all shades, black, gray, and white, from all the communities and of all the varieties possible; what might be called, if such a coupling of names were not disrespectful, a sort of motley convent.

From the time of the Empire all these poor scattered and desolate maidens had been permitted to take shelter under the wings of the Benedictine-Bernardines. The government made them a small allowance; the ladies of the Petit Picpus had received them with eagerness. It was a grotesque mixture. Each followed her own rules. The schoolgirls were sometimes permitted, as a great recreation, to make them a visit; so that these young memories have retained, among others, a reminiscence of Holy Mother Bazile, of Holy Mother Scholastique, and of Mother Jacob.

One of these refugees found herself again almost in her own home. She was a nun of St. Aure, the only one of her order who survived. The ancient convent of the Ladies of St. Aure occupied, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, this same house of the Petit Picpus which afterward belonged to the Benedictines of Martin Verga. This holy maiden, too poor to wear the magnificent dress of her order, which was a white robe with a scarlet scapular, had piously clothed a little image with it, which she showed complacently, and which at her death she bequeathed to the house. In 1824 there remained of this order only one nun; to-day there remains only a doll.

In addition to these worthy mothers, a few old women of fashion had obtained permission of the prioress, as had Mme. Albertine, to retire into the little convent. Among the number were Mme. de Beaufort, Mme. d'Hautpoul, and Mme. la Marquise Dufresne. Another was known in the convent only by the horrible noise she made in blowing her nose. The pupils called her Racketini.

About 1820 or 1821, Mme. de Genlis, who at that time was editing a little magazine called the "Intrépide," asked permission to occupy a room at the Convent of the Petit Picpus. M. l'Duke of Orleans recommended her. A buzzing in the hive; the mothers were all in a tremor; Mme. de Genlis had written romances, but she declared that she was the first to detest them, and then she had ar-

rived at her phase of fierce devotion. God aiding, and the prince also, she entered.

She went away at the end of six or eight months, giving as a reason that the garden had no shade. The nuns were in raptures. Although very old, she still played on the harp, and that very well.

On going away she left her mark on her cell. Mme. de Genlis was superstitious and fond of Latin. These two terms give a very good outline of her. There could still be seen, a few years ago, pasted up in a little closet in her cell, in which she locked up her money and jewelry, these five Latin lines written in her hand with red ink upon yellow paper, and which, in her opinion, possessed the virtue of frightening away thieves:

> Imparibus meritis pendent tria corpora ramis;
> Dismas et Gesmas, media est divina potestas;
> Alta petit Dismas, infelix, infirma, Gesmas;
> Nos et res nostras conservet summa potestas,
> Hos versus dicas, ne tu furto tua perdas.

These lines in Latin of the sixth century raise the question as to whether the names of the two thieves of Calvary were, as is commonly believed, Dimas and Gestas, or Dismas and Gesmas. The latter orthography would make against the pretensions which the Vicomte de Gestas put forth, in the last century, to be a descendant of the unrepentant thief. The convenient virtue attributed to these lines was, moreover, an article of faith in the Order of the Hospitallers.

The church of the convent, which was built in such a manner as to separate as much as possible the great convent from the school, was, of course, common to the school, the great convent and the little convent. The public even were admitted there by a beggarly entrance opening from the street. But everything was arranged in such a way that none of the inmates of the cloister could see a face from without. Imagine a church, the choir of which should be seized by a gigantic hand and bent round in such a way as to form, not, as in ordinary churches, a prolongation behind the altar, but a sort of room or obscure cavern at the right of the priest; imagine this room closed by the curtain seven feet high of which we have al-

ready spoken; heap together in the shade of this curtain, on wooden stalls, the nuns of the choir at the left, the pupils at the right, the sister servants and the novices in the rear, and you will have some idea of the nuns of the Petit Picpus attending divine service. This cavern, which was called the choir, communicated with the cloister by a narrow passage. The church received light from the garden. When the nuns were attending offices in which their rules commanded silence the public was advised of their presence only by the sound of the rising and falling stall-seats.

VII

A FEW OUTLINES IN THIS SHADE.

DURING the six years which separated 1819 from 1825, the prioress of the Petit Picpus was Mdlle. de Blemeur, whose religious name was Mother Innocent. She was of the family of Marguerite de Blemeur, author of the "Lives of the Saints of the Order of St. Benedict." She had been re-elected. A woman of about sixty, short, fat, "chanting like a cracked kettle," says the letter from which we have already quoted; but an excellent woman, the only one who was cheerful in the whole convent, and on that account adored.

Mother Innocent resembled her ancestor Marguerite, the Dacier of the order. She was well-read, erudite, learned, skilful, curious in history, stuffed with Latin, crammed with Greek, full of Hebrew, and rather a monk than a nun.

The sub-prioress was an old Spanish nun almost blind, Mother Cineres.

The most esteemed among the mothers were Mother Saint Honorine, the treasurer; Mother Saint Gertrude, first mistress of the novices; Mother Saint Ange, second mistress; Mother Annunciation, sacristan; Mother Saint Augustine, nurse, the only nun in the convent who was ill-natured; then Mother Saint Mechthilde (Mdlle. Gauvain), quite young and having a wonderful voice; Mother Des Anges (Mdlle. Drouet), who had been in the convent of the Filles-Dieu and in the convent of the Trésor, between Gisors and Magny; Mother Saint Joseph (Mdlle.

de Cogolludo), Mother Saint Adelaide (Mdlle. d'Auverney), Mother Mercy (Mdlle. de Cifuentes), who could not endure the austerities; Mother Compassion (Mdlle. de la Miltière, received at sixty in spite of the rules, very rich); Mother Providence (Mdlle. de Laudinière), Mother Presentation (Mdlle. de Siguenza), who was prioress in 1847; finally, Mother Saint Céligne (sister of the sculptor Ceracchi), since insane, and Mother Saint Chantal (Mdlle. de Suzon), since insane.

There was still among the prettiest a charming girl of twenty-three, from the Isle of Bourbon, a descendant of the Chevalier Roze, who was called in the world Mdlle. Roze, and who called herself Mother Assumption.

Mother Saint Mechthilde, who had charge of the singing and the choir, gladly availed herself of the pupils. She usually took a complete gamut of them—that is to say, seven, from ten years old to sixteen, inclusive, of graduated voice and stature, and had them sing, standing in a row, ranged according to their age, from the smallest to the largest. This presented to the sight something like a harp of young girls, a sort of living pipe of Pan made of angels.

Those of the servant sisters whom the pupils liked best were Sister Saint Euphrasie, Sister Saint Marguerite, Sister Saint Martha, who was in her dotage, and Sister Saint Michael, whose long nose made them laugh.

All these women were gentle to all these children. The nuns were severe only to themselves. The only fires were in the school building, and the fare, compared with that of the convent, was choice. Besides that, they received a thousand little attentions. Only when a child passed near a nun and spoke to her, the nun never answered.

This rule of silence had had this effect that, in the whole convent, speech was withdrawn from human creatures and given to inanimate objects. Sometimes it was the church-bell that spoke, sometimes the gardener's. A very sonorous bell, placed beside the portress, and which was heard all over the house, indicated by its variations, which were a kind of acoustic telegraph, all the acts of material life to be performed, and called to the locutory, if need were, this or that inhabitant of the house. Each person and each thing had its special ring. The prioress

had one and one; the sub-prioress one and two. Six-five announced the recitation, so that the pupils never said going to recitation, but going to six-five. Four-four was Mme. de Genlis's signal. It was heard very often. "It is the four-deuce," said the uncharitable. Nineteen strokes announced a great event. It was the opening of the *close door,* a fearful iron plate bristling with bolts which turned upon its hinges only before the archbishop.

He and the gardener excepted, as we have said, no man entered the convent. The pupils saw two others; one, the almoner, the Abbé Banès, old and ugly, whom they had the privilege of contemplating through a grate in the choir; the other, the drawing-master, M. Ansiaux, whom the letter from which we have already quoted a few lines calls "M. Anciot," and describes as a "horrid old hunchback."

We see that all the men were select.

Such was this rare house.

VIII

POST CORDA LAPIDES

AFTER sketching its moral features, it may not be useless to point out in a few words its material configuration. The reader has already some idea of it.

The convent of the Petit Picpus St. Antoine almost entirely filled the large trapezium which was formed by the intersection of the Rue Polonceau, the Rue Droit Mur, the Petite Rue Picpus, and the built-up alley called in the old plans Rue Aumarais. These four streets surrounded this trapezium like a ditch. The convent was composed of several buildings and a garden. The principal building, taken as a whole, was an aggregation of hybrid constructions which, in a bird's-eye view, presented with considerable accuracy the form of a gibbet laid down on the ground.

The long arm of the gibbet extended along the whole portion of the Rue Droit Mur comprised between the Petite Rue Picpus and the Rue Polonceau; the short arm was a high, gray, severe, grated façade which overlooked the Petite Rue Picpus; the *porte cochère,* No. 62, marked

the end of it. Toward the middle of this façade, the dust and ashes had whitened an old low-arched door where the spiders made their webs, and which was opened only for an hour or two on Sunday, and on the rare occasions when the corpse of a nun was taken out of the convent. It was the public entrance of the church. The elbow of the gibbet was a square hall, which served as pantry, and which the nuns called *the expense*. In the long arm were the cells of the mothers, sisters, and novices. In the short arm were the kitchens, the refectory, lined with cells, and the church. Between the door, No. 62, and the corner of the closed Alley Aumarais, was the school, which could not be seen from the outside. The rest of the trapezium formed a garden, which was much lower than the level of the Rue Polonceau, so that the walls were considerably higher on the inside than on the outside. The garden, which was slightly convex, had in the centre, on the top of a knoll, a beautiful fir, pointed and conical, from which parted, as from the centre of a buckler, four broad walks, and arranged two by two between the broad walks, eight narrow ones, so that, if the inclosure had been circular, the geometrical plan of the walks would have resembled a cross placed over a wheel. The walks, all extending to the very irregular walls of the garden, were of unequal length. They were bordered with gooseberry bushes. At the further end of the garden a row of large poplars extended from the ruins of the old convent, which was at the corner of the Rue Droit Mur, to the house of the little convent, which was at the corner of the Alley Aumarais. Before the little convent was what was called the little garden. Add to this outline a courtyard, all manner of angles made by detached buildings, prison walls, no prospect and no neighborhood, but the long black line of roofs which ran along the other side of the Rue Polonceau, and you can form a complete image of what was, forty-five years ago, the house of the Bernardines of the Petit Picpus. This holy house had been built on the exact site of a famous tennis-court, which existed from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, and which was called the "court of the 11,000 devils."

All these streets, moreover, were among the most ancient in Paris. These names, Droit Mur and Aumarais,

are very old; the streets which bear them are much older still. The Alley Aumarais was called the Alley Maugout; the Rue Droit Mur was called the Rue des Eglantiers, for God opened the flowers before man cut stones.

IX

A CENTURY UNDER A GUIMPE

SINCE we are dealing with the details of what was formerly the convent of the Petit Picpus, and have dared to open a window upon that secluded asylum, the reader will pardon us another little digression, foreign to the object of this book, but characteristic and useful, as it teaches us that the cloister itself has its original characters.

There was in the little convent a centenarian who came from the Abbey of Fontevrault. Before the Revolution she had been in society. She talked much of M. de Miromesnil, keeper of the seals under Louis XVI, and of the lady of a President Duplat, whom she had known very well. It was her pleasure and her vanity to bring forward these names on all occasions. She told wonders of the Abbey of Fontevrault, that it was like a city, and that there were streets within the convent.

She spoke with a Picardy accent which delighted the pupils. Every year she solemnly renewed her vows, and, at the moment of taking the oath, she would say to the priest: "Mgr. St. Francis gave it to Mgr. St. Julian, Mgr. St. Julian gave it to Mgr. St. Eusebius, Mgr. St. Eusebius gave it to Mgr. St. Procopius," etc.; "so I give it to you, my father."

And the pupils would laugh, not in their sleeves, but in their veils, joyous little stifled laughs which made the mothers frown.

At one time the centenarian was telling stories. She said that in her youth the Bernardines did not yield the precedence to the Mousquetaires. It was a century which was speaking, but it was the eighteenth century. She told of the custom in Champagne and Burgundy, before the Revolution, of the four wines. When a great personage, a marshal of France, a prince, a duke, or peer, passed through a city of Burgundy or Champagne, the corpora-

tion of the city waited on him, delivered an address, and presented him with four silver goblets in which were four different wines. Upon the first goblet he read this inscription, "monkey wine"; upon the second, "lion wine"; upon the third, "sheep wine"; upon the fourth, "swine wine." These four inscriptions expressed the four descending degrees of drunkenness; the first, that which enlivens; the second, that which irritates; the third, that which stupefies; finally the last, that which brutalizes.

She had in a closet, under key, a mysterious object, which she cherished very highly. The rules of Fontevrault did not prohibit it. She would not show this object to anybody. She shut herself up, which her rules permitted, and hid herself whenever she wished to look at it. If she heard a step in the hall she shut the closet as quickly as she could with her old hands. As soon as anybody spoke to her about this she was silent, although she was so fond of talking. The most curious were foiled by her silence, and the most persevering by her obstinacy. This also was a subject of comment for all who were idle or listless in the convent. What, then, could this thing be, so secret and so precious, which was the treasure of the centenarian? Doubtless, some sacred book, or some unique chaplet, or some proven relic. They lost themselves in conjecture. On the death of the poor old woman they ran to the closet sooner, perhaps, than was seemly, and opened it. The object of their curiosity was found under triple cloths, like a blessed patine. It was a Faënza plate, representing loves in flight, pursued by apothecaries' boys, armed with enormous syringes. The pursuit is full of grimaces and comic postures. One of the charming little loves is already spitted. He struggles, shakes his little wings, and still tries to fly away, but the lad capering about laughs with a Satanic laughter. Moral—love conquered by colic. This plate, very curious, moreover, and which had the honor, perhaps, of giving an idea to Molière, was still in existence in September, 1845; it was for sale in a second-hand store in the Boulevard Beaumarchais.

This good old woman would receive no visit from the outside world, "because," said she, "the locutory is too gloomy."

X

ORIGIN OF THE PERPETUAL ADORATION

THAT almost sepulchral locutory, of which we have endeavored to give an idea, is an entirely local feature, which is not reproduced with the same severity in other convents. At the convent of the Rue du Temple in particular, which, indeed, was of another order, the black shutters were replaced by brown curtains, and the locutory itself was a nicely floored parlor, the windows of which were draped with white muslin, while the walls admitted a variety of pictures, a portrait of a Benedictine nun, with uncovered face, flower-pieces, and even a Turk's head.

It was in the garden of the convent of the Rue du Temple that that horse-chestnut tree stood which passed for the most beautiful and the largest in France, and which, among the good people of the eighteenth century, had the name of being the father of all the horse-chestnuts in the kingdom.

As we have said, this convent of the Temple was occupied by the Benedictines of the Perpetual Adoration, Benedictines quite distinct from those who spring from Cîteaux. This order of the perpetual adoration is not very ancient, and does not date back more than 200 years. In 1649, the holy sacrament was profaned twice, within a few days, in two churches in Paris, at St. Sulpice, and at St. Jean en Grève—a rare and terrible sacrilege, which shocked the whole city. The Prior Grand-Vicar of Saint Germain des Prés ordained a solemn procession of all his clergy, in which the Papal nuncio officiated. But this expiation was not sufficient for two noble women, Mme. Courtin, Marquise de Boucs, and the Countess of Châteauvieux. This outrage, committed before the "most august sacrament of the altar," although transient, did not pass away from these two holy souls, and it seemed to them that it could be atoned for only by a "perpetual adoration" in some convent. They both, one in 1652, the other in 1653, made donations of considerable sums to Mother Catharine de Bar, surnamed of the holy sacrament, a Benedictine

nun, to enable her to found with that pious object a monastery of the Order of St. Benedict; the first permission for this foundation was given to Mother Catharine de Bar by M. de Metz, Abbé of St. Germain, "with the stipulation that no maiden shall be received unless she brings 300 livres of income, which is 6,000 livres of principal." After the Abbé of St. Germain, the king granted letters patent, and the whole, abbatial charter and letters royal, was confirmed in 1654 by the chamber of accounts and by the Parliament.

Such is the origin and the legal consecration of the establishment of the Benedictines of the Perpetual Adoration of the Holy Sacrament at Paris. Their first convent was "built new," Rue Casette, with the money of Mesdames de Boucs and de Châteauvieux.

This order, as we see, is not to be confounded with the Benedictines called Cistercians. It sprang from the Abbé of St. Germain des Prés in the same manner as the Ladies of the Sacred Heart spring from the general of the Jesuits and the sisters of charity from the general of the Lazarists.

It is also entirely different from the Bernardines of the Petit Picpus, whose interior life we have been exhibiting. In 1657, Pope Alexander VII, by special bull, authorized the Bernardines of the Petit Picpus to practice the perpetual adoration like the Benedictines of the Holy Sacrament. But the two orders, none the less, remained distinct.

XI

END OF THE PETIT PICPUS

FROM the time of the Restoration the convent of the Petit Picpus had been dwindling away; this was a portion of the general death of the order, which, since the eighteenth century, has been going the way of all religious orders. Meditation is, as well as prayer, a necessity of humanity; but, like everything which the Revolution has touched, it will transform itself, and from being hostile to social progress will become favorable to it.

The house of the Petit Picpus dwindled rapidly. In 1840 the little convent had disappeared; the school had

disappeared. There were no longer either the old women or the young girls; the former were dead, the latter had gone away. *Volaverunt.*

The rules of the perpetual adoration are so rigid that they inspire dismay; inclinations recoil, the order gets no recruits. In 1845 it still gathered here and there a few sisters' servants; but no nuns of the choir. Forty years ago there were nearly 100 nuns, fifteen years ago there were only twenty-eight. How many are there to-day? In 1847 the prioress was young, a sign that the opportunity for choice was limited. She was not forty years of age. As the number diminishes the fatigue increases; the service of each becomes more difficult, thenceforth they saw the moment approaching when there should be only a dozen sorrowful and bowed shoulders to bear the hard rules of St. Benedict. The burden is inflexible, and remains the same for the few as for the many. It weighs down, it crushes. Thus they died. Since the author of this book lived in Paris two have died. One was twenty-five years of age, the other twenty-three years of age. The latter might say with Julia Alpinula: *"Hic jaceo, Vixi annos viginti et tres."* It was on account of this decay that the convent abandoned the education of girls.

We could not pass by this extraordinary, unknown, obscure house without entering and leading in those who accompany us, and who listen as we relate, for the benefit of some, perhaps, the melancholy history of Jean Valjean. We have penetrated into that community full of its old practices which seemed so novel to-day. It is the closed garden. *Hortus conclusus.* We have spoken of this singular place with minuteness, but with respect, as much, at least, as respect and minuteness are reconcilable. We do not comprehend everything, but we insult nothing. We are equally distant from the hosannahs of Joseph de Maistre, who goes so far as to sanctify the executioner, and the mockery of Voltaire, who goes so far as to rail at the crucifix.

Illogicalness of Voltaire, be it said by the way; for Voltaire would have defended Jesus as he defended Calas; and, for those even who deny the superhuman incarnation, what does the crucifix represent? The assassinated sage.

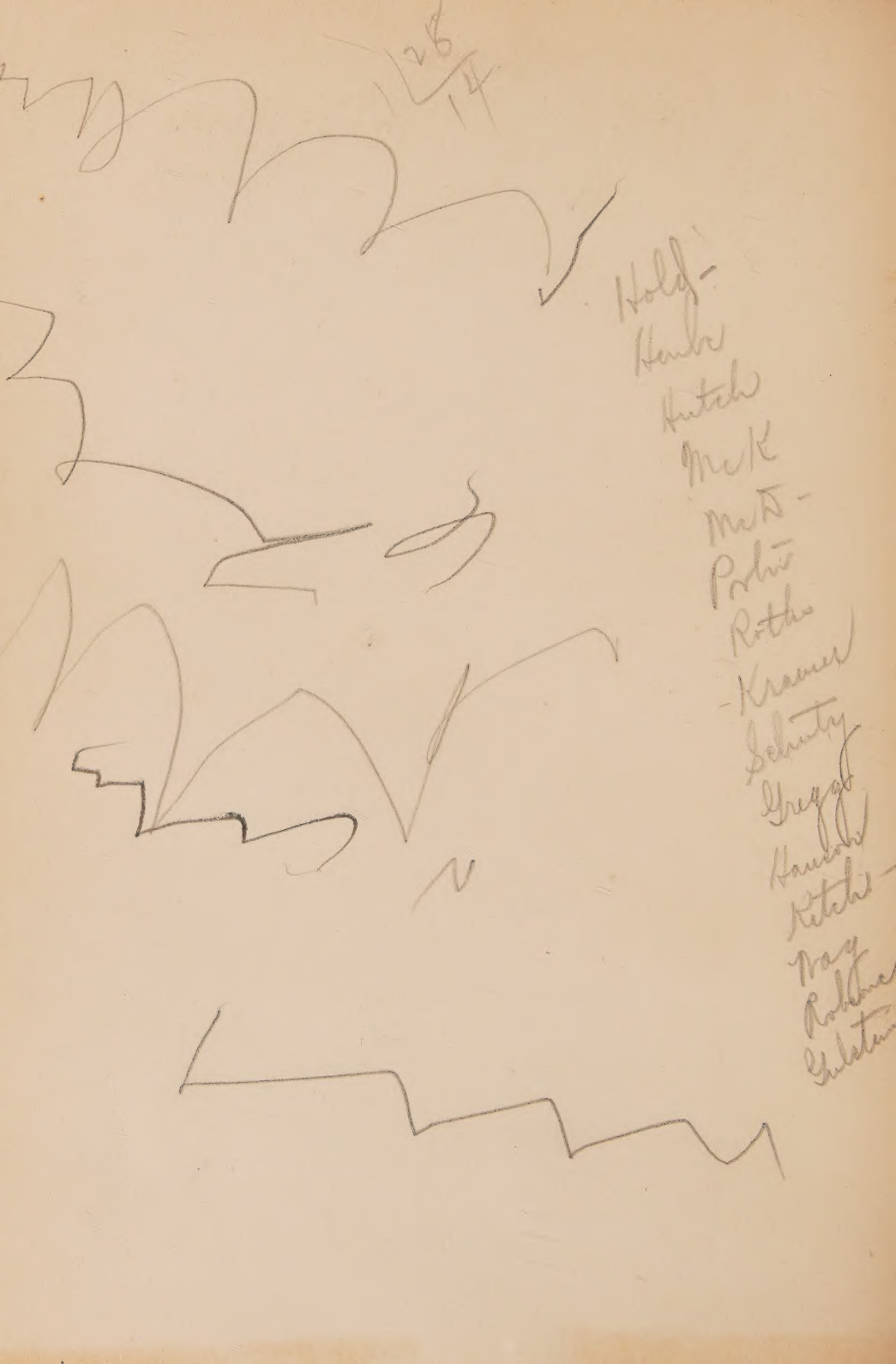
In the nineteenth century the religious idea is undergo-

ing a crisis. We are unlearning certain things, and we do well, provided that while unlearning one thing we are learning another. No vacuum in the human heart. Certain forms are torn down, and it is well that they should be, but on condition that they are followed by reconstruction.

In the meantime let us study the things which are no more. It is necessary to understand them, were it only to avoid them. The counterfeits of the past take assumed names, and are fond of calling themselves the future. That spectre, the past, not unfrequently falsifies its passport. Let us be ready for the snare. Let us beware. The past has a face, superstition; and a mask, hypocrisy. Let us denounce the face and tear off the mask.

As to convents, they present a complex question. A question of civilization, which condemns them: a question of liberty, which protects them.

END OF PART ONE OF "LES MISERABLES."


28
14
Holf-
Hawke
Hutch
McK
McA-
Pohl
Roth
-Kramer
Schantz
Gregg
Hawke
Hutch
Ray
Robbins
Silverstein